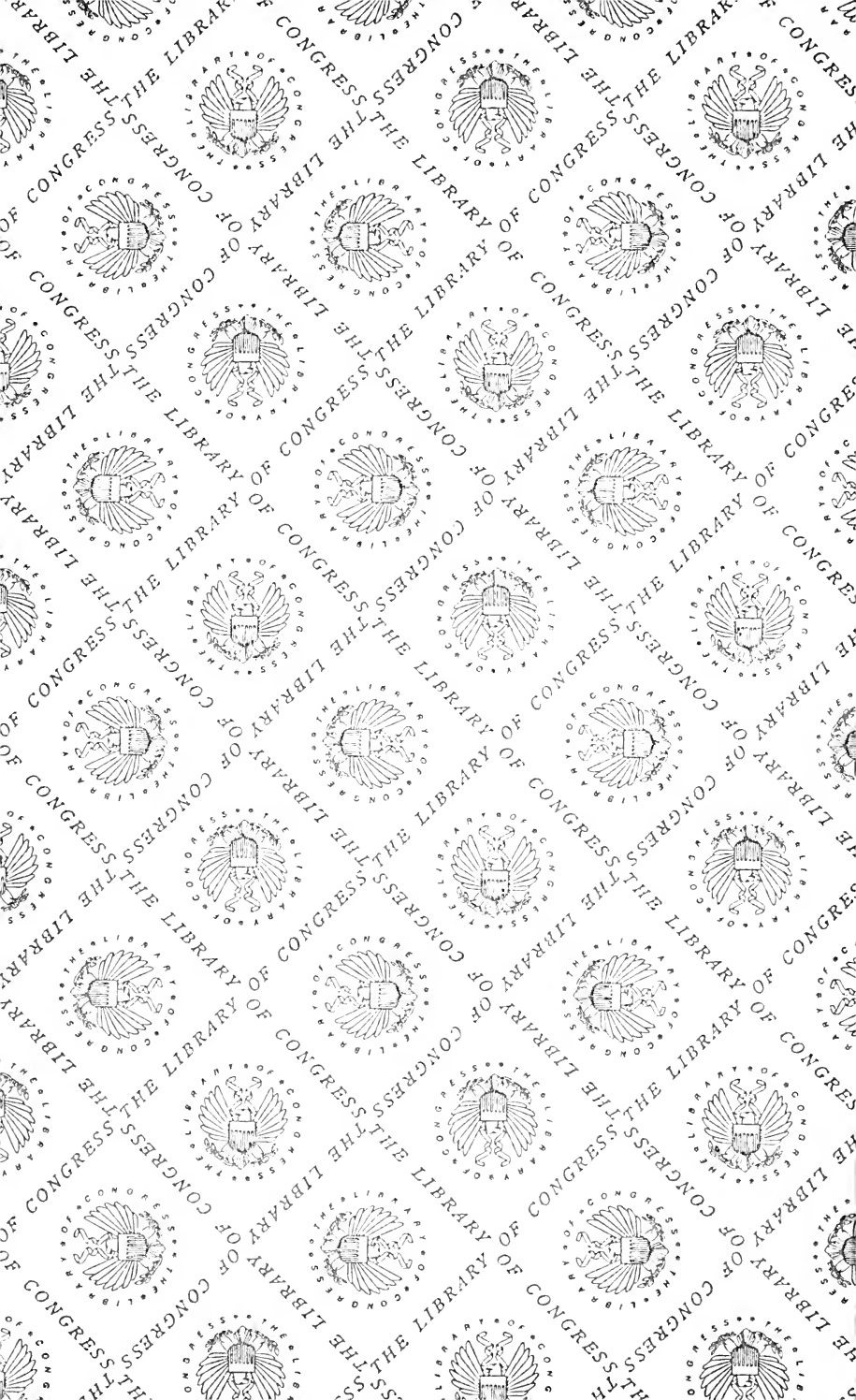


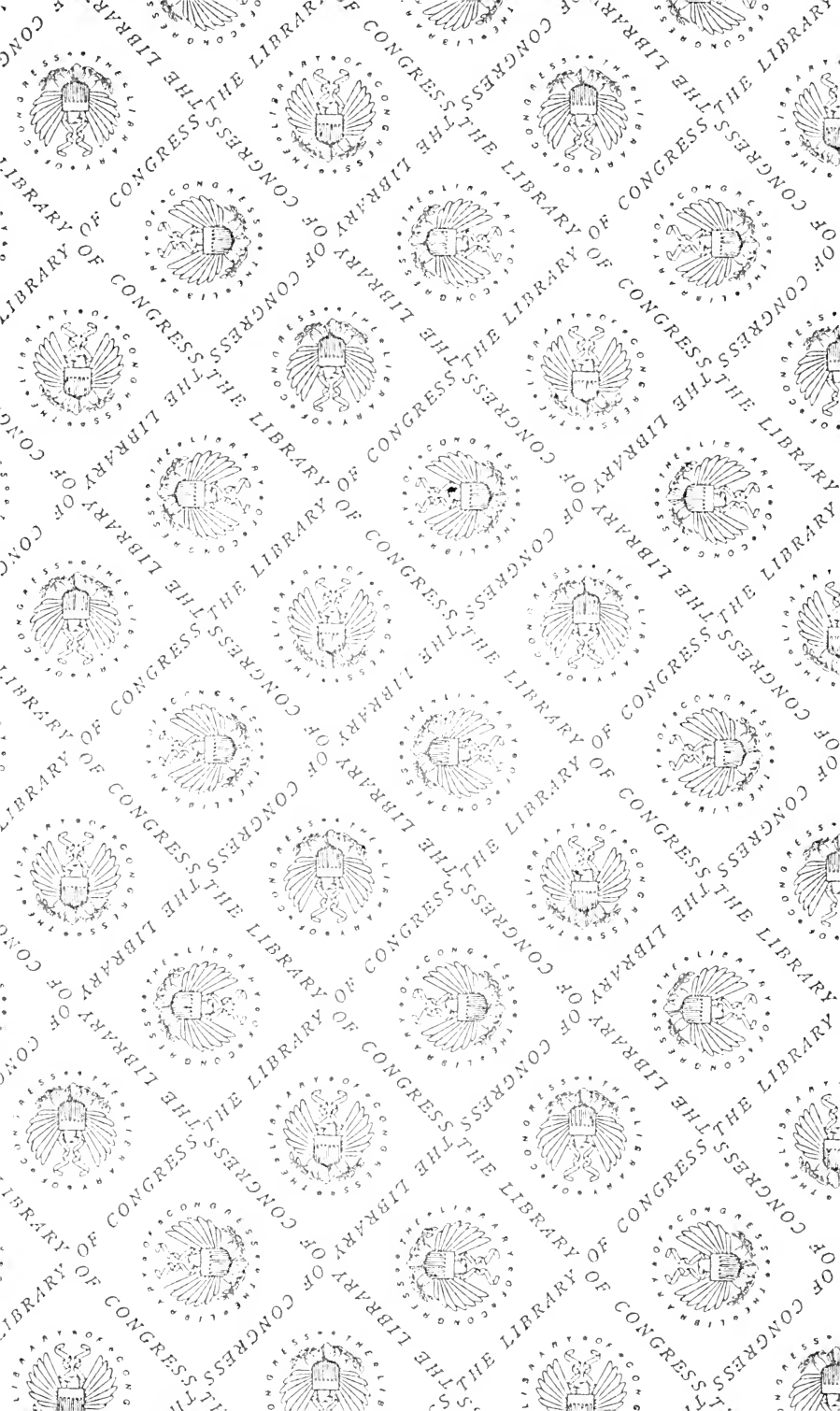
D 570

.33

332d

.L4

















# In Italy with the 332nd Infantry

*By*

***Joseph L. Lettau***

*(Battalion Sergeant Major, 332nd Infantry)*

11510  
11  
11  
11  
11

**Copyright 1921**  
**By Joseph L. Lettau**



JUL -7 '21

© Cl. A 614941

11510

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION .....	5— 6
CHAPTER	
I France .....	7—13
II France to Italy; Villafranca, Custozza, Sommacompagna, Verona .....	16—20
III In Tents near Valleggio; Villa Angelica..	21—27
IV Treviso; The Air Raid; Before the Drive..	28—34
V The Drive; At the Tagliamento; Ipplis ..	35—45
VI Cormons, Austria; Cormons to Treviso.....	46—50
VII Treviso after the Drive; In Rome with Wilson .....	51—57
VIII Third Battalion at Fiume .....	58—61
IX Second Battalion in Dalmatia and Monte- negro .....	62—66
X Treviso to Genoa; The Investigation .....	67—70
XI Genoa—The Regiment Re-united .....	71—72
XII Genoa to Ohio; Gibraltar; Camp Merritt; Parade in New York; Cleveland; Camp Sherman; Discharged .....	73—76

J. L. LETTAU, Publisher  
461 Edwards St.  
Youngstown, Ohio

---

EVANGELICAL PRESS, CLEVELAND

## INTRODUCTION

THE 332ND INFANTRY REGIMENT, N. A., was organized in the early days of September, 1917, at Camp Sherman, Ohio, around a nucleus of four commissioned officers and about thirty enlisted men of the regular army. The first selectives arrived at Camp September 5th, 1917, and from that day until the regiment's departure for Europe the personnel was constantly changing, newly arrived men being trained for a few months and then being sent to other camps and overseas.

All the necessary "shots in the back," drills, hikes, rifle practice, bayonet work, signalling, tent pitching and kitchen police were gone through and, at last, on May 24th, 1918 with ranks filled and hopes high, we boarded the train for Camp Merritt, N. J.

After a weary twelve days here of endless clothing checks, physical examinations and dripping letters to loved ones, we proceeded to Hoboken, crossed the river to the majestic "Aquitania," second largest ship afloat, and went to our—er—state-rooms. We were too much filled with curiosity to explore this huge vessel to think much of the coming dangers. We lay next to the pier until the morning of June 8th, when to our disgust we were ordered below until the ship should have cleared the harbor. So, we left America without even the slight consolation of wafting a kiss to Miss Liberty, whose features we were not to see for ten, long, weary months.

Besides the 332nd Infantry, there were aboard Major General Glenn with his staff and about 2000 men of medical units. To our great surprise, and a twinge of misgiving, we had no escort after the first day out and this, with the U-boats spreading terror along our coast. At this time, even Coney Island had been darkened at night. However, the "Aquitania" had speed as well as grace and it would have required a fast U-boat to drive a torpedo into her side as she sped on her zig-zag course.

The weather was perfect and we proceeded without adventure until the fourth day out when someone sighted what he thought was the periscope of a submarine. (I think he must have been a Medic!) At any rate, his loudly voiced cry started a small panic which might have reached disastrous dimensions

had not word suddenly come that the object sighted was a floating buoy used by the transports for a target in practice firing.

Some of the most intensely interesting minutes aboard were spent watching the little three inch guns which every few minutes turned on their pivots as they followed each suspicious looking object in the water. There were not enough gunners, so several doughboys were detailed to render assistance. Besides these guardians of the public welfare, the regular guard was stationed at various points on the ship, the companies taking their turn at guard duty.

By way of showing the submariners what they thought of them, our excellent band gave several greatly enjoyed concerts on the open deck.

On the morning of June 15th, Ireland was sighted and, before noon, we had passed up the river Mersey and stood on land once more in the city of Liverpool, England.

Our stay here was confined to a walk from the pier to a railroad station about two miles away. The English cordially welcomed us and sent us off with a boy's band conducted by a genial, elderly man.

The ride from Liverpool, in the peculiar little English coaches, took us across the rich farm lands of Southern England. We passed through so many tunnels that, when I think of England, I think of tunnels broken here and there by little towns containing little brick houses bordered by pretty little gardens most neatly kept.

Arriving at Southampton, we hiked miles to a "Rest Camp." I would not dare mention these two words in the vicinity of a doughboy for, it is true, we do **not** understand the English language as our English friends do. Imagine yourself and twelve others occupying a tent made for eight and this tent luxuriously furnished with a—wooden floor and a tent pole. Then imagine resting on a bed consisting of the contents of your pack, namely, two blankets, one mess kit, one shelter half, one rope, one tent pole, five pins, one suit of BVD'S, two pairs of socks and a pair of shoe laces. Keep your picture moving and imagine the task of collecting your property in the morning and making a neat roll. And this is what they call a "Rest Camp!"

We began to take war seriously. "If this is a rest camp," we thought, "why—" but figure it out for yourself. Indeed we were glad to leave Southampton on the cattle boats which awaited us.

# IN ITALY WITH THE 332<sup>nd</sup> INFANTRY

---

## CHAPTER I

### France

**F**RANCE AT LAST! Early on the morning of June 17th, 1918, our little cattle boat, having safely traversed the submarine-infested channel, steamed into the ancient harbor of Havre. In the gray morning not much of the town could be seen and, anyway, we were too busy to admire the scenery.

Companies were formed and trucks loaded and we started for the camp, our eyes wide with curiosity, for we were in France, that land of which we had heard so much for the last two years. I retain an impression of a dusty, aged, wasted city of old brick and stone buildings. The shopkeepers' signs were interesting and—mysterious. As we moved away from the business district we passed many piles of ammunition and cannon guarded by Algerian soldiers. It was edifying to see these colored soldiers snap to attention.

Everywhere, however, our passage was marked for the absence of anything like a greeting from the natives. We wondered. In America, on the train, racing to the coast, whistles shrieked, bells rang and people cheered. In England, bands played and people loudly applauded. Yet, here in France, to whose immediate aid we were rushing, no word of welcome came to us. It was grim. Did France think that America was too slow? Was France too sorrowful at her losses? Did she think that these dressed up shopmen, farmers and clerks were poor substitutes for her own brave who had died in the vain attempt to stem the German tide? Whatever her thoughts, we saw nothing to confirm the prevalent idea that the French are an excitable people.

Continuing through the winding streets, up and down hills, we came to a sandy, wire-enclosed field containing a few wooden buildings and many tents. It was a dreary looking place and the painted signs giving directions to be followed in case of an air raid failed to put any humor in the situation.

Outside the barbed wire fence, which held us prisoners, a sentinel paced up and down. On the street, there were at all times several boys waiting and begging for food or cigarettes. At meal time the number increased and with them came women

and girls begging for food. A walk around showed us that the camp was scarcely more than a makeshift and we hoped we would not remain long.

While here, some of us had near-baths which we shall never forget. For an hour we stood in line waiting our turn to enter the bath house and when at last we entered and had gotten "soaped up," the water limit for the day was reached and the water was turned off.

About noon of the 18th, we moved from this camp. Luckily, for us, we were first at the train and upon discovering that eight men and all their equipment, irrespective of rank, excepting commissioned officers, were to be jammed into one compartment made for eight to sit in, and that we were to spend the night there, we began to consider the matter seriously. Before long, one of the boys unfolded a plan and, a moment later, three busier Sergeants Major than we three could not have been found. We turned "baggage smashers" and in a few minutes, a whole second class compartment was empty, and later, some of the officers discovered that there were as many as three of them to a compartment.

Our ride across France took us close to Paris but as we passed at night we did not see it. France is beautiful. There was the same orderliness that we noted in England except that there was more evidence of recent neglect. The hedges along the tracks, which in other days had been so well kept, now showed lack of attention. Cattle were few and far between and no young men were seen, except those in uniform.

On the afternoon of the 19th we arrived at a town named Foulain. However, we remained in the cars until darkness. We saw no reason for wasting these daylight hours but later learned that troop movements were allowed only under cover of darkness.

"Where are we?" "Do you think we're near the front?" "Is'nt this a h—l of a place to stop?" These were the unanswerable questions we asked each other.

At last we were ordered from the train. The companies, except one, were formed and marched away into the dark, silent, rainy night. As usual, we attended to the loading of our boxes and when this was accomplished, we climbed aboard the truck. Just about this time, however, the officer who had been left behind to supervise the loading of supplies, saw us on top of the truck. With angry voice he wanted to know what we were doing there and before anyone mustered up courage to present an alibi, he ordered us off, leaving only a half dozen aboard to unload the baggage. Sorrowfully we climbed



down, but we left our packs on the truck and we felt that we had "slipped one over" at any rate.

At 11:00 o'clock, we fell in behind "C" Company and began the memorable march to Mandres. The rain had ceased and the night was now truly beautiful. The stars above shone brightly and as we marched up the valley alongside a silvery canal, flanked on both sides by cool, whispering trees, we found it difficult to believe that a desperate battle raged a few miles away.

We walked at a good pace for fifty minutes and then rested ten minutes, according to the army marching rules. Of course, we smoked a cigarette, the doughboy's best friend, and enjoyed for the time, the coolness and quiet. It was difficult to get up and continue the march, and long before the next rest period came, our feet were dragging. How those lads with heavy packs stood it, is difficult to understand. Remember that for about forty hours we had been riding in a space that scarcely permitted stretching. When the order came for the second rest period, the stars as interesting phenomena had lost their charm. Even a cigarette was unattractive. We wanted to lie down and sleep, sleep, sleep. When the order to fall in came again, we stumbled to our feet and actually "fell in." The next hour was torture. Never did we want rest so much. Now and then we sighted a town ahead and our spirits rose, but always, it seemed, our town was further on. "Why are there so many hills in France?" "Will we never get to that—town?" "Is the Captain on the right road?" These thoughts filled our minds and I believe some of the boys walked in their sleep. This condition was not exceptional, it was the general feeling.

Everything ends, and at last we had climbed our last hill and had arrived in the muddy street of a quaint little, stone-housed town. Lights began to twinkle here and there and people came out to see their first American soldiers. It was 2 A. M. I understood that we were going into billets, but it seemed impossible to find room for one thousand men in these few houses. At length, several detachments moved away. Some of these men climbed ladders and disappeared into attics and hay lofts; others passed from view into cellars and barns. "So these are billets?"

After our Detachment had stood in the road many minutes, we began to realize that unless we ourselves found a place to sleep, we would very likely be there in the road until daybreak. Therefore, we marched up the street and found a newly con-

structed wooden building, entered it, picked up the softest looking piece of wood and "went to bed."

We who stopped in Mandres were fortunate as the Second and Third Battalions were stationed four or five miles beyond Mandres.

In the morning, after a breakfast of canned willy, canned tomatoes and crackers, we located Regimental Headquarters.

Later, we learned that there were rooms for some of us. We had pictured a hay loft at best but when we found that we had drawn rooms containing real beds, we were pleased beyond description. Two of us were billeted in the home of an old lady who smiled and talked incessantly, but since our French was in its infancy and had not reached the talking stage, we could only grin at her and say "Wee, wee" whenever it appeared time. However, we got along famously.

When the lady finally bowed herself out, we examined the room. The bed drew our attention immediately. It was not six feet long (I am, and I know the bed was not) and it stood about four feet from the floor. The odd thing about it was a sort of feather-bed on top of the covers. We could never learn to use it as a cover but always lovingly put it upon the floor whenever we did not fear the lady's coming. One of the covers was made entirely of heavy, exquisite lace, pretty to look at, but not half as warm as our "three thin blankets."

There were two pictures on the wall, both of young soldiers, and we knew why the old lady was so kind to us. A dresser and a stand with bowl and pitcher completed the room. Simple it was, but a mansion compared to what we expected.

The companies were put to work immediately. Those men who had offended were given the task of rendering a town sanitary that had been unsanitary since the first man and his cow had come to live there. The others embarked upon a six weeks training schedule, the author of which, evidently, had never heard of relaxation. From early morning, when the bugle blew "Assembly," khaki clad youths came down ladders, out of cellars, out of barns and out of houses, and throughout the day, pausing only at noon, American cries and activities resounded through the ordinarily quiet village until nightfall. Our service at the front, it appeared, would begin at the expiration of these six weeks.

As mentioned above, not all of our regiment were stationed at this town, Mandres, for it was too small. Headquarters, A, B, C, and D Companies were here. The Second and Third Battalions and Supply and Machine Gun Companies were at little towns close by called Essey-les-Eaux, Donne Marie and

Lanques. However, practically the same events took place at each little town. At stated times, the different companies leaving their stations, met on the line of march and when a prearranged point was reached, skirmishes and trench maneuvers were executed. The noon meal was served in the field from the rolling kitchens. Drinking water was frowned on while marching and at the conclusion of a march there were generally many thick tongues, parched throats and black lips.

During June a party of commissioned and non-commissioned officers were sent to the Infantry school at Chatillon-sur-Seine, there to further their education in matters military.

Generally, in the evening, the boys wrote letters and read the Paris edition of the "Chicago Tribune" and the "New York Herald." Also, the thirst was quenched. The water was under the ban of the Medical Officer unless it was purified by the addition of hypo-chloride of lime. This water was placed in a lister bag hung upon a tripod and was liked less than the various "vins" and brandies offered in the vin shops, especially since most of these little shops were presided over by made-moiselles. During the day no drinks could be sold to Americans, but after the companies were dismissed, until taps, the shopkeepers reaped a harvest of francs.

The Y. M. C. A., Red Cross, K. of C. and Salvation Army, apparently, did not know of our existence, for we saw nothing of them. The nearest Y. M. C. A. was at Nogent, about two and one half miles distance.

Our excellent band made the evenings happy for French and Americans with splendid concerts on the "Square."

Many visits were made to the French homes. Ostensibly they were for the purpose of learning the French language and customs. However, the home with a feminine teacher was generally the most popular school.

Near our abode was the home of a very dear old French couple where we learned that, in this locality, the chief industry was the manufacture of knives and scissors. All work was done by hand in the homes. Our host plied his trade in the room which was also kitchen, dining-room and bedroom. The little cook stove, not more than two feet high, looked like a toy while the fuel used was twigs.

The average villager was kind to us but the shopkeepers were very grasping. They sold their articles for any sum they thought they could get from the Americans. This profiteering, especially in foodstuffs, was the cause of an order to the Americans forbidding them to buy certain foodstuffs, for the

profiteers raised prices so high that the natives could not buy these articles.

However, the order was not always obeyed for the temptation to have a "home cooked meal" was very great. Now and then enough francs could be gathered together to have a banquet of chicken, French-fried potatoes, eggs, lettuce, home made bread, butter and vin. The reader has heard of the thrifty French housewife but I hope he will not condemn the boys for passing up the chicken head and feet which were served on the plate.

Except on Sundays, most of the people wore wooden shoes and they could be heard clattering along on the road a block away.

On June 29th we were told that General Pershing was coming to review us. That meant a night of polishing guns, cleaning quarters, grounds and clothes. When he came, the next day, Premier Clemenceau accompanied him. General Pershing smiled and spoke to the boys as he passed along the line. He looked like a man capable of doing big things.

The next day a rumor went forth that we were scheduled to go to Italy as a propaganda regiment to encourage the Italians. As this rumor gained credence, the study of French lost ground and many copies of "French for Soldiers" went to the bottom of the barracks bags.

On the Fourth of July we were awakened before reveille by our band which, in two separate sections, marched around the town endeavoring to see which section could make more noise. During the day athletic games were staged and prizes were given to the winners.

The following week, on July 9th, Elsie Janis came to our neighborhood and provided an evening's entertainment we shall never forget. In a natural amphitheatre, a rude wooden stage with improvised lights, was built. The hillside was dotted with the "flowers" of the American army, the 331st in overseas caps, the 332nd in campaign hats. Both regimental bands were near the stage and they kept everyone in good spirits. A truck drove up and a piano was unloaded and placed upon the stage. Shortly after, Miss Janis and her mother arrived in a limousine, and from the moment the door of the car opened until she left the stage, everyone had a wonderful time. Miss Janis sang several songs, new to us, and her parodies and accompanying antics were greatly enjoyed.

On July 14th, France's Independence Day, another holiday was declared. We were free to go anywhere possible in the twenty-four hours. In order to bring the holiday spirit to the whole regiment, the band was sent around to the various towns. In each town a short concert was played and at the Second Battalion headquarters it co-operated in a pleasant program of speeches and songs attended by the French people as well as the soldiers.

A few days later, the order to move to Italy was officially announced and a transfer of physically imperfect men took place. Some of our men were sent to the 331st while they were to transfer better men to the 332nd. The transfer was effected, but when our doctors examined the new men, they found many of them in poorer condition than those that we had sent to the 331st. So it was necessary to use some strenuous language and to go through the process of transfer once more.

During July the Americans were fighting around Chateau Thierry and were stopping the German drive that was causing France to despair. Possibly this success assured our trip to Italy, for after this time our movement was speeded up. Many things were necessary, such as rolling stock, travel rations, equipment, motor trucks, etc. We understood that we were the only American regiment going to Italy and therefore we would have to take care of much that is usually looked after by special units. However, on July 25th, the first section of the 332nd marched to Foulain, boarded the train and was on the way to Italy.

## CHAPTER II

## France to Italy; Sommacompagna and Verona

THERE WERE ABOUT thirty motor trucks and two touring cars fastened on flat cars, and these trucks filled with canvas tents looked more inviting to us than the notorious box cars marked "40 HOMMES, 8 CHEVAUX".

This journey, which was to occupy three days and two nights, was remarkable for its changing scenes and climates. Leaving Foulain about 3:00 P. M. July 25th, we proceeded in a south-eastern direction, reaching Gray about twilight.

Drawing forth our canned willy, crackers, tomatoes, etc., we had "dinner." Upon completing this luxurious repast we pulled a canvas tarpaulin over us and put our "bedroom" in shape. The evening air was growing colder as we approached the mountains, but we slept comfortably even though we had allowed ourselves the luxury of removing shoes and puttees.

While we had taken care of ourselves in this manner, the boys in the box cars were anything but comfortable. The French box car is not the large one we see on American railroads and it was only by taking turns at lying down that anyone got any sleep.

We awoke early and found ourselves in the scenic foothills of the Alps. Little villages snuggled up on the mountain sides, the stone roofs sparkling in the sunshine like those of a fairy city. There was, as usual, the towering church in each village round which the houses clustered "like little chicks under the mother hen's wings."

Here and there as we journeyed on, we saw wonderfully constructed castles set on high peaks commanding the countryside. One glance at their evident strength, together with the thought that firearms were unknown in the old days, and one ceased to wonder how the barons ruled the country in feudal days. Not only were the castles strongly built; they were beautiful as well, and the eye loved to dwell on them as long as they were in sight.

Many mountains are absolutely barren; they seem to be exhausted with the age long battle with the elements. When Napoleon marched through these valleys they were old; when Hannibal led his conquering Carthaginians they were old; and the years since have added nothing but more scars and fissures to their old sides. A few miles of these barren hills were quite

depressing and we were glad when they had been left behind and mountains, green from top to bottom, took their places. Many of the peaks were snow-capped, though the days were quite mild.

The next large city we passed through was Aix-les-Bains. We had no time to try the famous waters, for the train starter with his little "fish horn" soon sent us on our way. Shortly after, we passed through Chambéry and when we awoke on the morning of the 27th, we were on the way to Montmelian. This town was of especial importance to us because here in the mountains, the English had established a washing station. Our train stopped and everyone got off and enjoyed a wash or a shave. Hot coffee was furnished and we had our noonday meal.

With our toilet and meal completed we proceeded, journeying on past St. Julien and St. Michel, past the lovely waterfall at La Praz, and finally reached Modane, the last French town, about 9:00 P. M.

We remained here more than an hour. The Red Cross representatives distributed bars of chocolate and hot coffee with rum, all of which was thankfully received on this cold night.

About 10:30 P. M., an electric engine was attached to our train and we were whizzed through a very long tunnel. Upon reaching the other end, we were in Italy.

The inhabitants of the little town at which we stopped were most enthusiastic in their welcome, although it was near midnight. A band played the "Star Spangled Banner," Italian troops saluted and the people gave us chocolate, little flags, cigarettes and sandwiches. We wondered that Italy had such an abundance of these articles since France was barren.

An Italian general caused much laughter when he approached the boys, torch in hand, "to inspect the Americans."

The Italians have a way of waving the hand in greeting that furnished much amusement. The arm is held up, palm of the hand inward and the hand is rapidly opened and closed. Shouts of "Viva l' Americani" accompanied each move of the fingers. The boys were quick to reply and answering shouts of, "Viva l' Italia," came from them.

Later in the night we entered Turin and here again were delightfully received. We ourselves could not realize what our presence meant to these people.

In the early morning we passed beautiful Lake Como and, some time later, caught a glimpse of Milan, the outline of her venerable Cathedral standing out from the lower buildings of the city. Our train section did not enter Milan, but another

section stopped there and the boys marched through the city amid great applause.

One could not journey across the northern part of Italy, from the border to Milan, without exclaiming at the fertility of the soil. Every inch of ground is productive and the climate is much warmer than on the other side of the mountains.

At noon on the 27th we reached Verona. Again our progress was halted by our enthusiastic Allies who showered us with little Italian flags and handkerchiefs, while their bands played our National anthem over and over. Of course this was popular (?) with us as it gave us an opportunity of standing at attention and saluting.

Once more we started and our next and final stop was Villa Franca. Here, amid great enthusiasm, we detrained. The American Red Cross surprised us with hot coffee and doughnuts and never was a lunch more appreciated. While we ate, American aviators flew above us, doing amazing stunts.

We eventually collected all of the headquarters property, put it on a truck and set out for Sommacompagna, later called, "Summer-complaint." In less than half an hour, we came into this little town which was to be the home of Regimental Headquarters, Headquarters Company and the First Battalion. The Second Battalion and Field Hospital No. 331 were located at historic Custozza; the Third Battalion remained at Villa Franca with the Supply Company. The 331st Field Hospital had been attached to the regiment when we left France. The Machine Gun Company was alone at Villa Contini.

Our driver took us through the walled streets of the town and set us down before the doors of "The Villa of 1001 Roses."

Not knowing where our quarters were to be, we made our bunks on the floor. Right there we became acquainted with the Italian mosquito and of all the mosquitoes we have met, he is the most voracious and insistent. "Cusses" and slaps were heard throughout the night.

At every move of the regiment new orders governing the actions of the troops are issued. So, for a time we were quite busy getting these out. Not too busy, however, to explore our villa. It was the property of an Italian Countess, widow of an Italian general. The building, of white stone, had a balcony in front from which the Countess often looked down at the curious "Americanos." At the south end there was a large room, very likely a conservatory, the walls of which were covered with what were at one time beautiful paintings. This was the office of the Sergeants Major. At the other end of the building, the Colonel and Adjutant had their desks.



In front of the building the road divided forming a round plot of grass on which were shrubbery, flowers and palm trees. To the left was a thicket of bamboo trees; to the right were majestic palms. Immediately before our entrance was a grape arbor, which, in the hot weather, was very enticing.

The rear, however, was most attractive. Passing across the court, shut in on three sides by the villa, the garage and the servants quarters, one came to a grove of cool, hanging trees. Winding paths bordered by the hedgerows led through this grove to the edge of a steep hill. Here a small balcony of stone had been built and one could see directly below, the white road twining its serpentine course among green trees, past little red roofed village houses presided over by the eternal campanile of the village church. While we sweltered in the sun amid these tropical surroundings, the mountain tops, visible across the valley, were snow-capped.

Sommacompagna is quite small. When one walked through the streets there was a feeling as of being walled in. The church, the municipio, the vino shops and the houses were made of stone, and walls of masonry extended around the boundaries of each person's property. Five minutes walk took one into the country and the country meant the open fields, for in Italy the farmers live in the towns and go out to work their farms.

Possibly we had come to Italy to cement national relations; to put out any lingering fire of love the Northern Italians had for the Germans; to show Italy that America was at her side. Nevertheless, as in France, when "Assembly" sounded in the early morning, doughboys, gun in hand, poured from barns, cellars and houses for the daily work. On the hottest days drills were ordered and borne, but when evening came, the tension was relaxed and until 10:30 the boys had good times.

In this section of Italy there are many irrigation ditches fed by mountain streams, so that the farms are very productive. These streams and ditches were very popular as swimming places after a hot day's drill and along the banks could be seen many future husbands drilling themselves in the art of laundering.

Then, there were the new vinos (wines) and cognacs of Italy to be tried and many pleasant evenings were spent in dingy little shops we would not think of entering at home.

Others, musically inclined, struck up an acquaintance with the owner of a piano and thus amused themselves with the good old American tunes. The Italians generally liked American rag-time. We were made welcome everywhere and in turn thought highly of our hosts.

Some of us were fortunate enough to secure rooms with beds and we felt as if we were going to like the war in Italy. Owing to mosquitoes we found use for the mosquito nets issued by the Quartermaster, for we persisted in sleeping with the windows open despite our "landlady" who insisted on closing them. The natives close their windows at night and sprinkle water upon the floor.

The kitchen of this house contained a stone fire-place with a large copper pot hung on a tripod. In this vessel almost everything was cooked over a fire made of twigs. Near the fire-place hung a pair of copper pails in which the women carried drinking water. These pails are fastened in the ends of a wooden device which fits over the shoulders and it was a common sight to see the women carrying them up the street while their wooden shoes clattered on the pavement.

In Italy there is a great devotion to the Madonna as is evident from the many shrines along the roads. An incident in this connection is worth recording, illustrating how this faith and devotion is inculcated in the children from birth. The baby of the house stumbled, fell upon the floor and cried. Her elder sister, about 14, quickly picked up a statue of the Madonna and held it toward the infant. The latter's face lighted as she grasped the statue and the cries abruptly ceased as she pressed the statue to her lips.

While at Sommacompagna, two important personages visited us. One, the King of Italy, who reviewed the regiment August 1st and complimented it highly on its marching and bearing; the other, the Prince of Wales who lunched with the Colonel.

At this town we became acquainted with the Italian oxen and donkeys. It was an ordinary sight to see a team consisting of an ox and a very small donkey drawing a cart.

Our meals here were very poor, at least in our Company. This question is largely up to the Mess Sergeant and cooks, but often, if the officers gave more attention to the meals they would be better.

It was said, our beef was killed one day and served the next, so that it was too fresh to eat and, accordingly, many claimed it caused illness.

The "hand shaking" policy seemed to have taken possession of everyone upon entering Italy and, in line with this, one half of the regiment was given passes and truck rides to Verona every Sunday. Verona is about an hour's ride from Sommacompagna.

One has many thoughts on entering a famous old Italian city. Here is Verona, old before the discovery of America, within whose walls great Dante lived and saw his Beatrice, which event gave to the world one of its sublimest poems, "The Divine Comedy." Here is the tomb of Romeo and Juliet who have been made immortal by Shakespeare; here is the old arena built under Diocletian in 290 A. D.; here is the tomb of the Scagliere; here is the church of St. Anastasia built in 1261. How we wandered through this ancient city amid strange yet somehow familiar scenes! How we wished we had studied our history and literature more diligently when in school! How we longed to speak the Italian language so that we might ask about this palace, that statue, this old church, that curious inscription! There is much to see and to learn in old Verona.

Its many treasures of the past, so fondly preserved, have not materially stopped the progress of this age, for the stores of its narrow business street, "Broadway" we called it, through which no horse or automobile passes, showed all the modern appliances to be found in the stores of the original Broadway. We were delightfully surprised.

While we were in Verona, a moving picture, blatantly billed as the "Mysteries of New York" was being shown. We were not interested but we did live through one act of an insipid love play in another theatre. The Italian idea of love as depicted on the screen is too "soft" for the rough and ready American, and Italian movies were never popular with the boys.

Our band sometimes came to Verona to play. The band stand was in a small park within a stone's throw of the arena. Across the street were several restaurants. To one of these we found our way and without trouble fell into the delightful Italian habit of taking refreshments seated at a table placed out upon the spacious sidewalk. We discovered "near ice-cream" and were quite happy.

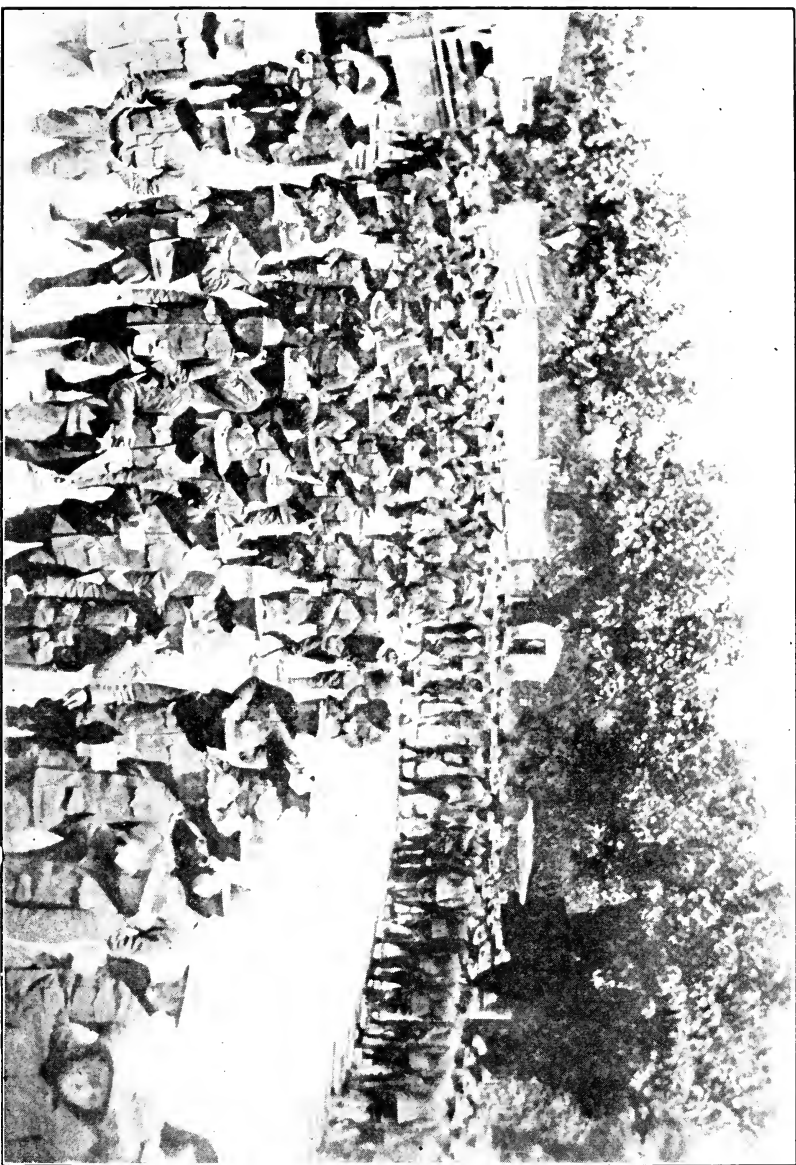
Incidentally, we learned that the Signorinas of Italy are very lovely and that they are not amateurs in dressing attractively. Those of the better class are always chaperoned in the evening. There were many such in company of father, or father and mother, and their deportment and beauty caused hearts to beat, while thoughts of Her in far off America rushed to mind.

During a field meet held at Verona, an American broke the world's record throwing the hand grenade.

Thus in work and play the days passed. We loved Italy at this time. It had been impressed upon us that we had been

chosen from the entire A. E. F. to represent American soldiery and that upon our actions Americans would be judged. The boys strove hard to maintain this standard.

About the middle of August, our Colonel began to think that fetes and reviews better fitted a conquering army than a regiment so lately civilians. He felt that town life, with the regiment in four different villages, was not good for discipline, and to the utter astonishment and objection of the Italians, civilian and military, we moved, on the 14th of August to a field near Vallegio.



ARRIVAL IN ITALY; VILLA FRANCA

U. S. Official



## CHAPTER III

## In Tents near Vallegio; Treviso; Villa Angelica

FOR THE FIRST TIME since we were at Havre, the regiment was united. There were acres of tents in orderly rows forming company streets. A highway ran through the center of the camp separating Regimental Headquarters and the Auxiliary companies from the letter companies.

Instead of the conservatory of a villa, we now had a tent for an office; instead of a soft bed and a roof over us at night, we had a tent and the earth. Most of us enjoyed this open air life more than the town life.

The ground occupied by the regiment was a mulberry grove. The peculiar looking, stunted mulberry trees were grown for the leaves upon which the silk worms feed. Silk was manufactured in Villa Franca and neighboring towns.

Vallegio is very hot and, on some days, the heat of the sun readily penetrated the canvas and seemed to be trying to dry the blood in our bodies. Yet, through it all, the boys drilled. How they stood it, God only knows. Of course, there were frequent rests but only American grit carried them through. War is what Sherman said it is, but the general thought was that it was not worse than drilling in Italy during August.

While the days were hot, the evenings were very pleasant and the nights were cool, so that one recuperated from the heat and labor of the day.

It may be interesting to know what a day meant to this so-called "Propaganda Regiment." The following is a copy of a Drill Schedule in operation at this time:

Monday A. M.

7:00 to 7:30	Physical exercise, running, jumping obstacles so as to develop agility and endurance of soldiers.
7:30 to 8:00	Instruction in use of Gas Mask.
8:00 to 8:15	Rest.
8:15 to 9:00	Company combat drill; including debouching from departure trenches. Attacks against points of resistance.
9:00 to 10:00	Bolt manipulation with magazine floor plate, magazine spring and follower removed.
10:00 to 10:15	Rest.
10:15 to 10:45	Platoon close order drill and Manual of Arms.

## P. M.

2:50 to 3:30 Position and aiming exercises.

3:30 to 5:30 Developing company strong points.

Tuesday Schedule the same as for Monday except; 8:15 to 9:00 A. M., period devoted to giving platoons an opportunity to go over carefully their particular phase of the company combat drill of the previous day, using Gas Masks, 7:30 to 8:00 A. M. Bayonet instruction.

Wednesday Same as Monday, except the period 8:15 to 9:00 during which time instructions will be given company specialists.

Thursday Same as Wednesday, except 7:30 to 8:00 bayonet instruction.

Friday Practice march under assumed tactical situation.

Saturday Trenches.

Looks like a real day's work in any climate.

Later, much of this drill was changed to sham battle in trenches in conjunction with Italy's justly famous Arditi, under Major Alleghetti. Each battalion took its turn in occupying prepared trenches which they undertook to hold against Italians. Bullets, bombs, and signals were used and an amateur would have thought a real battle was in progress. Near these trenches were vineyards and thereby hangs a tale which, however, must not be told now.

A rifle range was also constructed and those men who had never fired a rifle were given instruction. The one-pound and trench mortar batteries also had a range and our neighborhood took on more of a warlike appearance than the Italian-Austrian front.

Our Machine Gun men were not idle either, for they were sent to an Italian machine gun school in the mountains where they were drilled and perfected in such trifles as hitting targets on the opposite side of a mountain. They learned to shoot the FIAT (Italian) guns as well as their own.

However, though we worked hard through September and into October, life was not all work. In the camp itself we finally had a Red Cross and a Y. M. C. A. hut which were well patronized. It was a common sight to see two hundred or more boys in the canteen line waiting to buy cigarettes, chocolate bars and lemonade.

Near the camp was an irrigation ditch about five to seven feet wide and about four feet deep. About a mile away was the Mincio River, a real mountain stream. We bathed in both



places, but one day, the Powers that were, decreed that the enlisted men should swim in the ditch, for "Officers Only" were allowed in the river. It is superfluous to reproduce the comment, but let the reader think of nearly 4000 men in a ditch, in which clothes also were washed, while for less than two hundred officers, there was a large river.

One could also go to the little town of Valleggio. It had nothing to offer except the usual little wine shops and grocery stores where we showed a decided fondness for the Swiss chocolate and almonds. Occasionally, someone would go out into the country and bring back enough eggs, tomatoes, potatoes, etc., so that a few of the boys could enjoy a "real" meal in a Signora's kitchen.

We had been at the camp for several days when we were surprised by the arrival of the officers and non-commissioned officers we had left at the Infantry school in France. A few were missing, they having been given duties in France.

While at the tented camp, the system inaugurated at Sommacompagna, of using the trucks on Sundays to show Italy to the regiment and the regiment to Italy, was continued, and our first trip, on August 18th, was to Peschiera, situated on Lake Garda, beautiful, crystal, blue Lake Garda.

Like many Italian towns, Peschiera boasts a splendid old wall, relic of the days of battle. The town itself held us just during the time required to eat a lunch, for there was a boat making a trip around Lake Garda sometime after lunch and we could not miss that trip. The lake extends up into Austria, that country controlling the northern end while Italy controls the southern. It is fed by streams from the melted snow of the mountains, the bases of which meet the water. The shores are very rocky and when the boat docked at the little landings, the dancing waves could be seen lapping over the doorsteps of the stone houses built on the very edge of the land. The villages are beautiful and quaint beyond comparison. The picturesque dress of the people; the ornamented though poor stone houses; the little donkeys; the blue, crystal-clear water all about, with the mountain peaks above hidden by clouds, made an unforgettable picture. Many of these simple villagers had never seen an American soldier and when we approached a town, at least half of the population turned out to stare at us and wave a greeting in their peculiar, backhanded way.

On the hillsides facing the lake, many pretty homes have been built, always of stone, while vines and shrubbery are so well trained and trimmed that these dwellings look like fairy palaces.

On the 24th of August, the big minstrel show, which the talent of the regiment had been rehearsing for some time, took place. Neighboring British and Italian officers were to be guests of our officers this evening, while two nights later, the enlisted men were to entertain the men of the British and Italian armies.

A stage was erected with one side of the Y. M. C. A. as its back, and the "orchestra" was gayly decorated with lanterns and flags. The performance was a regulation American minstrel show and was a great credit to the boys who took part in it. Besides the minstrel show proper, there were sketches by two clever cartoonists, several vocal solos, a violin solo and dances. This may sound ordinary but considering the time, the circumstances and the place, it will be seen how extraordinary it was.

The performance was repeated for enlisted men two nights later and once more proved a success.

These good times, however, were not to last, for on the 11th of September we said goodbye to our Second Battalion which had been selected to hold a sector of the Italian line on the Piave River. With moist eyes we watched them march away. How many of them, our comrades of a year, would return? But they, led by the band, stepped away lightly with shining faces. I know that even mortal battle was more welcome to them than that soul-deadening drill in the hot sun. Hourly we awaited news from them, but beyond a few meagre reports that they were successfully occupying the trenches, we heard little.

From what I have been able to learn, however, they went into their sector and held it. With characteristic American love of action, their quiet sector was hardly bearable. For Americans to stand silently in the trenches and watch enemy shells and aeroplanes pass overhead without replying was unheard of. However, "to take a shot," as many wished would have called down upon them the merciless rebuke of the Italian General under whose orders they were. No unauthorized shooting was allowed. So, our gallant Second chafed and obeyed orders as good soldiers do.

On Friday, September 13th, the remainder of the regiment was engaged in a sham battle. They were advancing under a barrage laid down by our machine guns, one pounders and trench mortars. All the gunners were working fast in an earnest endeavor to make a good showing. A group of officers was standing behind the trench mortars watching the mimic battle, when, without warning, there was a terrible ex-

plosion. One of the trench mortar shells, it was thought, exploded prematurely, scattering death and injury for many yards. When the final count was taken, it was found that one lieutenant and four men were killed and about forty-seven officers and men were wounded. Among the officers wounded so badly that they never again joined the regiment were the Lieutenant Colonel, one major and the Supply Officer.

On September 14th there was a great military funeral when the dead were lovingly laid to rest in the Italian cemetery at Villa Franca.

On September 18th, "B" Company and the Band went to Rome to participate in the annual September 20th celebration. With them were several of our best athletes. When the Americans arrived in Rome, the Italians wondered why they had come. However, seeing they were there, they offered an Italian barracks to them. Besides this incident, the most noteworthy event was the disappointment of being in Rome with no money, for many of the boys were robbed in this barracks of the few liras they had.

About this time, September 25th, the fighting in the vicinities of St. Mihiel, St. Quentin and Dixmunde was fiercely progressing and the Allies were smashing great holes in the Hindenburg line. By the light of a candle the Regimental Interpreter read the news from the daily Italian papers and as he called the names of the towns mentioned, we drew red ink lines on our map of France. These were thrilling days.

These glowing reports from the Western front and the everlasting drilling combined to make life extremely disgusting to the boys. Many feared that the war would be over before the 332nd ever saw the front, and none of us could understand why the Italian front was so quiet while at every other point where there were Allies, there was a hail of shot and shell.

A camp bulletin was written by one of the Chaplains and it proved very popular until it was forced to suspend publication after the sixth issue owing to the lack of duplicating paper for the mimeograph machine.

At this time a post card craze seized nearly everyone. The post card industry in Italy is surpassed only by the vino and macaroni industries.

On September 30th, Bulgaria capitulated after a series of severe battles with the Serbians, Greeks and French.

During this time, you will remember, the Second Battalion was in the trenches, and it was generally thought that the First or Third Battalion would go up to relieve them in a few

weeks. The Colonel's idea in occupying these trenches was to reserve a place for the Americans when the day of battle came. However, before this plan could be carried out, the tents at Vallegio were struck and the regiment was moved to Treviso by train and the Second Battalion was ordered from the trenches so as to join the regiment at Treviso.

Regimental Headquarters remained till the last. Everyone except about twenty of us had gone. We were to follow in trucks with the records, boxes, etc. It was sad and lonesome to look at the former site of a living, bustling camp, now deserted and dead. Only a few fires, burning rubbish, remained to mark the place. With the coming of daylight, we loaded the trucks and set out for Treviso.

The trip occupied the entire day but it was pleasant in every respect. On passing through a village one could always get hot coffee, chocolate and fresh bread which helped our canned meals considerably.

It was evening when we reached our troops billeted in an Italian barracks on the outskirts of Treviso. Having no definite orders to proceed we remained for the night. In the morning we received orders to go to a villa outside of Treviso, which we did.

The name was Villa Angelica. The estate was a large one with the usual tropical trees and luxuriant vegetation even in October.

Our sleeping quarters were in one of the wings of the U shaped building. The walls and floors were of stone or cement and with no fire, they were not very comfortable with only a straw tick and a blanket separating one from the floor.

Our office was a chapel and part of the floor consisted of six marble slabs marking the last resting place of former members of the family.

Being now quite near the front, we could see at least five Italian observation balloons. Dozens of aeroplanes passed overhead daily and parts of many battles were seen as the aviators pursued one another across the sky. While here, we saw an Austrian plane suddenly dart out from behind a cloud and blow up an observation balloon before the observer could descend.

At night all lights were forbidden and the rumbling of the guns told us to heed the warning. However, it seems that Americans are ever ready to take a chance and with window blinds securely fastened, many a grand poker game was played by the candle light. This was our only recreation.

Outside, the nights were black and one took his life in his hands to go walking. We thought a great drive was imminent,

---

for every night the roads leading to the front were alive with moving vehicles. It seemed as though the steady flow of slow moving guns would never stop and we marveled at the dexterity of the unlighted, flying camions as they raced to the front with loads of supplies and raced to the rear for more.

Our companies were on the outskirts of Treviso in two Italian barracks. Their daily tasks were drills and hikes.

On October 14th, Samuel Gompers paid us a visit. The band played in his honor and his face brightened to hear the familiar rag-time. He gave a short address on the value of team-work.

Two days later we were ordered to Treviso. We had expected to go forward. However, despite our grumbling at the many moves, we were glad to bid farewell to Villa Angelica and its darkness.

## CHAPTER IV

## Treviso—Before the Drive

TREVISO IS SITUATED about 18 miles northwest of Venice. Before the war its population was about 17,000 but when we came to Treviso, it looked like a city of the dead. Nearly all the buildings were locked and the windows were boarded up, while many houses were in ruins from aeroplane raids. Most of the people had fled.

A walk around the town revealed an entirely different style of architecture than we had ever seen. This difference consists in the second floor of the buildings arching over the sidewalks as far as the curb, the supports being columns flush with the curbing. The arrangement was beneficial during the long rainy season.

Many canals of a questionable degree of sanitation dissect the town. It was a constant wonder to us that disease did not result from them. It is certain that many mosquitoes were bred there. The women washed clothes on the banks of the streams.

A city wall of ancient date, as could be seen from the Venetian lion shown thereon, completely encircled the town. This lion, found on many walls and monuments in the vicinity marked the time when Venice ruled Treviso and adjacent territory, from the 14th to the 17th centuries.

There were few buildings of note. The Cathedral of San Pietro with Titian's "Annunciation," and the Municipio were most important. Besides these there were the usual shops selling military goods, (mostly of American origin) perfumes, post cards and VINO.

At night Treviso was not inviting. Having been severely bombed by Austrian aviators, no outside lights were tolerated and those burning indoors had to be well screened. The only places where one could find amusement were in the little wine rooms. A typical approach to one was through a dark, narrow street. A tiny gleam of light cast a streak across the alley. As one drew near, loud laughter and talk was heard. It is bottled sunshine present in the red and white wines, the cognacs, vermouths and grappa.

The Headquarters of the regiment and our billets were in a three story college building which, with its many small rooms, made the most ideal place we had had thus far. The offices

were well furnished with good tables, desks, chairs and electric lights. There was also a piano, which with the stringed instruments played by members of the band, made a jazz band that commanded attention.

The companies were still housed in the two barracks. Straw was provided for the bed sacks which were placed on the floor. Stone floors may wear better than wooden floors, but they are not nearly so efficient as beds. The next time there is a war, let's hope it is in a country where wooden floors are in style. The rolling kitchens were set up in the yard below where the meals were served. The meals generally consisted of beef, brown beans, macaroni, rice, coffee, war-bread and macaroni, rice, war-bread, beef, brown beans and coffee.

On the 13th of October the Second Battalion came out of the trenches and about two days later joined us at Treviso. Though not one had been injured or killed, they were proclaimed heroes and were the envy of the regiment.

The work of the day consisted of long, vigorous hikes with full mobile equipment worn. To add to the work, the weather was rainy and cold. It was at this time that the changing of clothes was adopted in order to create a false impression as to the number of Americans in Italy. Upon going out in the morning, overcoats and helmets were worn and upon returning in the afternoon by a different route, the overcoats and helmets were out of sight and raincoats and caps were worn. The next day, perhaps, the change would be to leather jerkins. The object was attained, for later, the Austrian prisoners reported that they had been under the impression that there were several divisions of Americans in Italy.

In Treviso we were fortunate enough to be able to obtain hot baths in real tubs. Two hospitals, one of which had been bombed, containing seven and five tubs respectively, became the busiest places in town. The price of two and one half lires per bath was charged.

Sharing Treviso with us were several thousand Italian soldiers and a few thousand English and Scotch troops. These British troops were a happy crowd. Four years of war had made happy-go-lucky lads out of the most serious. We attended their picture shows, played football with them and clinked cups with them in perfect harmony.

About this time, Ostend and Lille were falling and the whole Hindenburg line was crumbling. Talk of an early peace filled the air. This was welcome news, for our thoughts were always of home. Nevertheless, we wanted to return only after a decisive victory for the Allies.

On the other hand, the news from home at this time was startling in its account of the ravages of a strange disease, "Influenza," which was decimating our camps and was spreading to the civilians. Until this time, we had had no trouble with the "Flu."

About October 29th, the moon came out in all its silvery splendor. It was so noticeable because it was practically the only light we had outdoors. The evenings were mild and inviting and as we walked under the arched houses and over the many little stone bridges, we talked of the possibility of an air raid, for moonlight nights are the delight of aviators.

On the night of October 22nd, I retired early. My sleep was unbroken until about 11:00 P. M. when I was awakened by an awful concussion which seemed just a block away. It appeared to my startled senses that a part of the earth had in some way torn loose from the main body and was hurtling through the sky. I do not remember of sitting up in bed, but I suppose I did. The first object to meet my startled gaze was my room-mate running toward the window. Exclaiming, "What's that!" I bounded from the bed and, gaining the window, peered anxiously at the heavens for, in a flash, I realized it was an air raid. Despite the din and roar of the guns far and near, we could hear the hum of the motors but could see no planes. A machine gun across the street in a building with its rapid "tat-tat-tat," sounded ridiculously like a woodpecker drumming on a tree and in spite of the danger caused much amusement. A block or so away, a big gun boomed every few minutes while for miles around guns of all sizes spoke.

The sky was dotted with the beams of powerful searchlights, which tried to locate the invaders. While the moon was bright, there were many small black clouds swiftly moving across the sky. It was an ideal night for a raid. We listened to the guns and watched the flares and then wondered at the silence in the building. Upon investigation we found all of the boys in the yard below looking up at the sky. We joined them. The great lights still searched the heavens, the beams reminding one of a boy's mirror shining on the ceiling of a room. Far up, black little puffs of smoke from the shells of the anti-aircraft guns floated around and, sometimes, we mistook them for aeroplanes. Again, far above, a small flame would burst forth and drop and all would be dark again.

It was not long however before we saw the folly of standing in the open, for shrapnel from our guns rained upon the ground near us, sounding like horseshoes as they struck the



pavement. As soon as the "rain" was over, the boys ran out to collect souvenirs, these consisting of rusty, jagged pieces of iron, some eight inches long.

Without seeing the aeroplanes, we retired to the straw ticks, somewhat disappointed. Nevertheless, before we could get to sleep, the big gun up the road spoke again and the chorus of smaller ones followed. Again we rushed from the room to follow the lights, the flares and the smoke clouds. This time our curiosity was rewarded with the sight of a plane. In the searchlight's ray, the whole body of the plane looked as if it had been dipped in phosphorus. It gleamed. I have no idea how fast that little body moved across the sky. Shells were bursting all around it and we expected every moment to see it fall, a mass of flames. But it proved too fast for the gunners, as it at length scurried behind a cloud out of the grasp of the searchlight. I shall never forget that plane, hurrying like a living thing to its haven behind the cloud. This thrilling scene enacted, we once more returned to resume our sleep.

However, we were again aroused when the raiders returned. This time the attack was short.

To our surprise, we learned in the morning, that no great damage was done and we heard with joy that not an American in any of the three outlying barracks was hurt. These boys were not allowed out of the barracks and, as one lad put it, "I lay flat on the floor so tight against the wall that I thought I'd push the wall out."

We thought, at that time, that the planes were out to bomb roads and supplies but we were told later that they came over to "get" the English and Americans. In fact, an Austrian aviator who had been in the raid was indiscreet enough to boast about it in Fiume to some of the Third Battalion men when they were in Fiume. When he came to he thought he had collided with the moon.

With the Allies smashing on on every front, the long quiet Italian front suddenly burst into flame on the morning of October 24th, when the Fourth Italian army began its attack in the Mt. Grappa region. The Italian Comando Supremo at last had an opportunity of using its cherished plan which was to separate the Austrians in the Trentino from those in the Piave section by breaking through at Vittorio and by an enveloping movement to bring about the fall of the whole mountain front which would in turn make imperative an Austrian retreat from the plain.

During October every available man and gun had been brought to the front, and between the Brenta River and the sea five armies were concentrated. All movements were to be completed by October 10th, but the rain raised the Piave River, which was the dividing line of the two combatants, so that nothing could be done until the 24th.

Opposed to the sixty three and one half Austrian divisions, made up of 1,070,000 men and 7000 guns were fifty-seven Allied divisions, or 912,000 men and 8929 guns. Of these fifty-seven divisions, fifty-one were Italian, three were British, two were French and one was Czeko-Slavok. In addition, there was "the young and ardent 332nd American Regiment," which was attached to the 10th Army, one of the four armies selected to break through the line before Vittorio.

The task allotted to the 10th Army was to force its way across the Piave at the Island Grave di Papadopoli. A desperate battle raged along the entire front but the 10th could not cross the Piave, owing to another rise in the river, until three bridges were thrown across on the 26th. The Tenth crossed, broke down the enemy resistance and went on to Cimadolmo, taking, during the day, over 5600 prisoners and twenty-four guns.

Somehow, the 332nd was held in reserve and did not participate in this great battle of Vittorio Veneto until several days after it had started.

We were still in Treviso the night of the 26th and when, now and then, an occasional Austrian shell whistled over the town, we began to think there was a war in Italy. Some of the boys were in favor of retiring to the specially built dugouts under the city wall. I joined a party of Italian and Italian-American soldiers, among them an American Interpreter. We descended into one of these holes. My surprise was great when, upon reaching the bottom of the steps, I found all sizes, ages and sexes of civilians and several soldiers, some standing, some sitting and some lying in cots. I had not known there were so many civilians in Treviso. We stood around for a few minutes but the atmosphere was such that we decided we would rather risk a big Bertha than breathe that air.

In our party were several Italian telegraphers who maintained a station in a heavily sand-bagged building in the center of town. I was invited to accompany them and I enjoyed several hours of unique entertainment.

It was midnight when we arrived at the station. One of the telegraphers went out to procure wine while another reconnoitered the kitchen. The result of their labors was wine,

war-bread and onions. Thus we feasted. At 2:30, with the repast over and the guns somewhat quieted, we heeded our drooping eyelids and returned to our quarters.

The next morning we received the glorious news that the Scotch and English had crossed the supposedly impassable Piave River and had advanced four miles beyond it. Several batches of prisoners came in. They were a ragged, wretched looking lot. They did not look like the fierce Huns we had heard about. From pale, emaciated faces their eyes looked out like those of dumb animals. An American near me muttered: "There's a grand indictment of war!"

The Allies were pleasantly engaged in going through the pockets of the prisoners in search of souvenirs. If something of value was found, a cigarette or piece of bread was given the hapless prisoner—sometimes.

Much money of a kind new to the world was found on the Austrians. The Austrians had been so sure of ultimate success, that they had printed Italian money, had paid their soldiers with it, and had forced the people whose towns they occupied to accept it.

The sight of the prisoners sent exciting thoughts through our minds for, with a battle raging within earshot, we asked each other, "When will our turn come?" Were we to continue our propaganda mission or were we reserves? Some time before we had been placed under the Command of an Italian General and had been assigned to his Division. Did this mean that we moved toward the battle line? Possibly the Commanding Officer knew, but the boys were bewildered. Everything seemed set for an early departure. Barracks bags and surplus supplies had been stowed away and men were detailed to remain as guards. The mail service ceased and when the boys started on the march in the morning no one knew if they were on a practice march or if they were advancing to battle. As usual, rumors were rampant and the news reached us at Headquarters, more than once, that our companies had started for the front.

On the night of October 28th, about 9:00 P. M. when I returned from a visit, I found Headquarters in an uproar. In breathless tones someone informed me that I'd better hurry and get ready for we were leaving before midnight. Word had been received a few minutes before from the Italian Commander. I bounded up the stairs and into my room. Most of my effects had been stowed away but I had not anticipated such short notice. However, my saddle bags were soon stuffed

full, my roll was made, and when the horses appeared, I was ready.

The Colonel and commissioned staff had gone on ahead and we were to join them later. I do not know who received this information, but at any rate, when we were ready to go, no one knew where we were to meet the Colonel. Thus we were in the enviable position of being A. W. O. L., lost, and our regiment was marching to battle!

We spurred our horses and raced around the town's quiet, dark streets when, finally, someone, (bless him) noticed several burning cigarette stubs and we shouted for joy. No one in Italy but Americans had cigarettes in abundance so, urging our heavily laden horses forward, we followed this distinctly American trail and at the city gate met the last company swinging past. A long procession of rolling kitchens and carts followed, ending with the jolly Veterinarian. We fell in behind him and began the march destined to end in Austria.

## CHAPTER V

## The Drive

WE HAD NOT GONE FAR when we were made aware of the overwhelming volume of traffic on this highway.

Troops and trucks were hurrying to the front; empty trucks were returning; and this road was not built for two trucks and a column of soldiers abreast. It was a most irritating advance. Every few minutes came the command to halt and fall out to the right of the road. Then, when the road was clear, we clambered back and proceeded.

The night was damp and the cold readily penetrated our clothes, chilling us to the bone while the frequent stops made it difficult to "get warmed up."

At 2:30 A. M., the column halted and moved over to the side of the road. When more than an hour passed and we still remained there in the cold, we wondered what was going on at the head of the column. Toward morning there was a stir around the rolling kitchens a few yards from us and upon investigation, we found that breakfast was being prepared. We crowded around the welcome fire. The hot coffee and rice restored our good spirits and warmed us.

About 6:00 A. M. an orderly found the Detachment and gave us the order to report at the head of the column. Upon arriving there we saw the first company in Varago being assigned a place to pitch pup-tents.

The town seemed like the gate to the frontier. Fortunately, there was a stone floor and four walls left for us. With the weather near the freezing point, the floor did not appeal to me as a bed and I searched for boards to lie upon. Being unable to obtain any I found it necessary to remove a superfluous door. A little later, when I passed this doorway, I noticed that the twin to my door was also missing.

There was nothing for the regiment to do but await the thinning out of the traffic. Meanwhile our trucks came up with fresh provisions.

At 7:30 on the morning of the 31st of October we marched out of Varago. The road was still congested, the principal reason being that the bridges over the Piave had been blown up and light pontoons were being used in their stead. The same

start and stop progress took place and it was not until about 2:00 P. M. that we reached the Piave. The river is very wide here, there being three kilometers between the two shores. The streams of the river were very swift and the island was gravelly, making progress slow and painful to the burdened men and animals.

On this island of Grave di Papadololi we saw our first signs of the recent struggle. Several dead, bloated horses and mules halfway in the water met our eyes. Nearby were corpses lying as they had fallen two or three days before. Helmets, gas masks, rifles and shells were strewn promiscuously about, near the road. The island is a forlorn place at best, but now, battle scarred and with dead men, dead horses and implements of warfare lying about, it was one's idea of supreme desolation. Here and there were great yellow splotches, showing where the gas shells had fallen.

At length, the last stream was crossed and we left the Piave behind us and passed through the ruins of Cimadolmo. On both sides of the road the small streams of more or less movement seemed to have collected all of the dead men, dead animals and rifles. The horses we saw had great holes in their flanks. Starving people under the thumb of a rapacious conquerer are not too particular when food is concerned.

Riding along in silence, looking at the poor dead human beings, we wondered if a gray-haired mother or flaxen-haired wife would not wait in vain for their return. I think many of us prayed that we would be spared their fate. It seemed terrible to allow these bodies to lie for days like those of animals, exposed to weather and prowling beasts.

Later we saw graves, large plots where the earth was still soft, with a few rude wooden crosses marking them. We saw one man lying head foremost in the stream alongside the road. It was difficult to believe that a few days before he had been living flesh and blood with beating heart, with emotions and hopes such as we all have.

The fields were pitted with great holes where the shells had struck and the few houses we saw were in ruins. No, this day's travel was not cheerful.

However, night at last cast its merciful mantle over the poor bits of clay and the ruined towns and when eight o'clock had come, we had reached our objective, Vazzola.

The companies pitched tents alongside the road, gathering corn stalks which were placed in the tents to lie upon, as the ground was cold and damp.

The Detachment found its way into a poor farmhouse. One could step from the home into the barn as both were under the same roof. These people were very thankful at their deliverance from the long Austrian occupation. Our interpreters told us that the Huns had been living upon locusts, boiled grass and domestic animals for some time. The people said they had been cruelly treated and many of the women had been mistreated.

Some of the boys slept in the stalls, some in the mangers, while as many as could crowd into the kitchen did so, for there was a welcome fire in the fireplace.

The march was resumed in the morning. A few corpses and dead animals were still in evidence and there was an unbelievable quantity of ammunition and many rifles lying about. Everything pointed to a hasty retreat.

A body of Italian Cavalry passed us during the day and we in turn passed some Tommies belonging to an English supply train. They shouted after us: "Better get aeroplanes, Sammy, if you want to catch them."

About this time there was some concern about rations. The regiment was able to cross the Monticano river but the pontoons were too light for our heavy trucks and they were forced to make a detour. Each man had two days iron rations on his person. These rations consisted of two small cans of beef and from six to eight hard biscuits. Our evening meal on this day was half a can of beef, biscuit and coffee.

We reached Gajarine by the evening of November 1st, about thirty miles from Treviso as we marched. The troops fell out on the sides of the road and pitched tents in the fields. During the night, as we learned later, our trucks with food came up this road and passed through the sleeping regiment without either party recognizing the other.

At 2:00 A. M., November 2nd, we were ordered on the march. The horses were left behind and were to come up later. We did not see the reason for starting at this time of the morning until an hour later when we reached a burnt down bridge at the Livenza River. Here we were forced to wait an hour until the bridge was repaired. We crossed and pushed on in the unknown darkness. At this time we were the advance guard of the 31st Italian Division of the Tenth Italian Army, commanded by the British General, Earl Cavan. Our own advance guard was a skirmish line consisting of a dozen platoons which scoured the country ahead of us.

We breakfasted in Maron.

At 9:00 A. M. we continued our march. During the day we crossed the Meduno River and in the afternoon camped

near Cimpello. At the last crossing the machine guns were dismantled and carried across, while the mules swam.

For the last few hours we were on the heels of the rapidly departing enemy. He showed himself skillful in retreat. At times, we were told, he had passed just five hours before us and we strove to catch up with him.

On this day, Rome reported that the Austrians were fleeing from Udine, fifty miles east of the Piave River, and that 80,000 prisoners and 1,600 guns had been captured by the Allies. On the Eastern, or low land section (our front) the Austrians were in full retreat. In the mountains, the battle was undecided.

The position of the Americans, as mentioned above, was that of advance guard of the Tenth Army. We also occupied the center, the Italians being on our right and the British on our left. However, at the time, we saw or heard nothing from our Allies.

In the morning of November 3rd, we again took up the pursuit. After marching about twelve miles we reached San Lorenzo about 2:30 P. M. and called it a day.

Our kitchens had failed to cross at one of the rivers and had not yet caught up, so there were no hot meals. Besides, we had been using our emergency rations and with our supplies "Somewhere in Italy," we were in danger of hunger.

Fortunately, the Austrians had not gathered up all of the corn and we were able to buy a sort of corn-meal from the natives, called polenti. The people had also dug up some wine that had been hidden from enemy eyes for many months. After tasting it we were sorry that the Austrians had not discovered it.

During the evening of the 3rd, three of us succeeded in annexing a corn-husk bed and therefore enjoyed a real sleep. In the morning we received a bowl of hot half-and-half and thought it the best breakfast we had ever had. The people were very kind to us but it was noticeable that they were actuated greatly by fear. The long Austrian occupation had left its effect upon them and they could not understand when we offered to pay for our accommodations.

When we stopped at San Lorenzo on the previous day, the Second and Third Battalions with attached platoons had pressed forward until they reached the Tagliamento River at a point called Ponte della Delizia, about four miles from S. Lorenzo. The bridge there had been blown up by the enemy and was still burning. The Austrians held the opposite shore having entrenched themselves behind the high dikes which also afforded



strong positions for machine guns. Notwithstanding this, they allowed the Americans to advance to the river.

During the evening an English-speaking Austrian called to the Americans, asking for a parley. One of the officers was sent to him. The Austrian informed him that at 3:00 P. M. an armistice between Italy and Austria became effective and therefore, they could see no reason for further bloodshed. This was NOT news to the American commanders.

The officer returned safely to the American lines and reported. However, notwithstanding the folly of further hostile demonstration, the preparations to attack were continued. What if the careers of a few hundred Americans in the bloom of youth were suddenly ended? What if a few hundred mothers and fathers never again looked on the fair features of their sons? Life was cheap in Europe in 1917 and 1918. The regiment could not return to America with no battles to its credit! Glory is always preferable to life!

As mentioned before, the bridge was in flames which threw a sort of screen about the vicinity so that the Austrians, evidently, did not correctly interpret the American activities. At any rate, they did not immediately fire. The Second Battalion and Machine Gun Company were to pass over the remaining section of the bridge, descend to the dry river bed and deploy along it. Company "H" was to be held in reserve. Battalion Headquarters was located behind one of the large concrete abutments of the bridge and from this point the action was directed. Headquarters Company was to entrench along the bank and the Third Battalion moved to the left in support. Our patrols reported about a battalion of Austrians across the river.

In the darkness of the early morning the Americans were drawing up along the river bed and artillery support was arranged for. Most of the movement had been completed when, about 3:30 A. M., the Austrians opened fire but, fortunately, their bullets went high as revealed by their tracers. The American movement being completed just as dawn was breaking, about 5:00 A. M., the order to advance was given. When about twenty yards had been covered the Americans were ordered to lie upon the ground. Only a few rounds had been fired and these were as well controlled here as on the firing range. The discipline was perfect. When "Cease firing!" sounded down the line, not a straggling, nervous shot was heard.

A little later the order to resume the advance was given and this move took the Americans across a shallow stream. Once

again they "lay low," and the Allied guns raked the Austrian positions which were soon badly battered. This much having been accomplished, the command to advance was again given and this move took the boys "over the top."

They yelled like Indians as they rushed forward and they maintained such a line as one sees only at a practice maneuver. For a band of untried soldiers they were splendid. The Austrians returned a hot fire but the boys pressed on as true brothers of the doughboys in France. On and on they went and when, at last, close quarters were reached, they showed they had forgotten nothing they had learned in the bayonet drills back at Camp Sherman. They were irresistible. The enemy broke and fled. In the same extended order, the pursuit was continued and every possible place which might shelter an Austrian was searched until the town of Codroipo was reached, where the order to halt was given.

At 3:00 P. M. on the fourth of November the armistice became binding and the conquerors rested on their laurels. Every Austrian inside a designated line was a prisoner. Most were willing ones.

One of the prisoners marching into Codroipo with the Americans attracted the attention of the villagers who shook their fists at him and called derisively: "You won't shoot your machine gun from our church tower any more." He had told the Americans he was a railroader and knew nothing about war.

Regimental Headquarters was still at San Lorenzo with the First Battalion. At 7:00 A. M. on the 4th, about two hours after the battle, we left S. Lorenzo and marched to Valvasone. Our victorious comrades were out of sight and hearing across the river and we remained on our side, pitching pup tents along the river shore.

Here we learned for the first time that at 3:00 P. M. an armistice with Austria went into effect. At first, it seemed incredible. Sometime later the order was issued to unload all guns at 3:00 P. M. and this announcement confirmed what we at first thought was a rumor and, as the boys broke formation, mighty cheers rang out and caps were thrown high in air.

Throughout the day and night shots were heard. It sounded like war, but it was only intensely happy Italians throwing superfluous hand grenades.

Now that Austria was out of the war, we wondered how long Germany could stand alone. The ever present rumor told us that we were soon to leave for Bavaria to beat upon Germany's back door. It seemed that we were to see some real fighting at last.

On the fifth of November, there was a continual stream of Austrian prisoners coming over the bridge and, on the opposite shore, there were thousands of prisoners waiting to cross. Every rank of the Austrian army was present: generals with their staffs as well as ragged, nearly barefooted privates. Many young Italian women ran out to the road as the officers passed and, recognizing some as their former prosecutors, caught hold of their feet and dragged them from their carriages, slapping and otherwise humiliating them. To the Allied soldier, every prisoner was a promising possibility for plunder and the Italians were exceptionally adept at this. Forming two lines, the Italians forced the Austrians to march through in single file while they searched the prisoners pockets, after which they were made to run the gauntlet. Sometimes even water bottles were snatched from them. The Americans were apt pupils and many were souvenir hunting, but I do not think they prized water bottles. Generally, they gave a few cigarettes if they found anything of value upon the prisoners.

Eight thousand of these prisoners came into American hands for delivery to an English prison camp. They were sent back guarded by several Headquarters bicycle orderlies. The "Top Sergeant" of these orderlies was a mischievous looking, light haired lad so short as to have received the name of "Shorty." As the column marched along the road several big Austrians stopped to argue among themselves about something and paid no attention to the guards who ordered them on. However, when "Shorty" appeared and used the butt of his gun across a couple backs, the argument stopped and the march continued. Arriving at the English camp, Shorty reported his eight thousand prisoners to the officer in charge who asked with twinkling eyes: "Do you want a receipt?" "Receipt h—l," said Shorty, "I'm glad to get rid of them!"

About 5:00 P. M. November 5th we were ordered back to San Lorenzo, and on the march I noticed that my buddy was shaky and dizzy. He had been complaining of a bad cold and headache but we thought it nothing more serious than grippe. Toward the end of the two hour walk, it was necessary to grasp his arm and help him with his pack. Once more in S. Lorenzo, we found our corn-stalk bed and he retired immediately. During the evening he ate a little polenti. He seemed very tired. If only our kitchens or supplies would reach us! We still had our emergency rations but we dared not eat too much of them. Fortunately, we were able to borrow twenty-four hours rations from the British.

In S. Lorenzo we learned that the casualties at the bridge had been one killed and seven wounded. The dead soldier, Corporal Charles S. Kell, "G" Company, had been shot through the forehead. The injured were being cared for in an improvised hospital in S. Lorenzo. With the odds against them, every wounded man recovered. Certainly, the regiment was a remarkably fortunate one.

On the following morning we set out for the bridge we had left the night before. My friend was feeling better after his good night's sleep and said little that was discouraging.

We had proceeded but a short distance when, upon coming around a curve in the road, we sighted the long line of steaming kitchens. Every face beamed and a greater cheer greeted the "eats" than that which greeted the news of the armistice.

At noon we reached the bridge and stopped for mess. It was the first hot meal for several days and "slum" never tasted better.

The bridge was choked with traffic so that we were forced to wait until nearly 3:00 P. M. to get started. While waiting I noticed our two automobiles, crossing the dry bed of the river. A happy thought struck me and I started for them. There was only the driver, one officer and some officers' bedding rolls in the one car and I determined to get in with the baggage.

When at last the order came to march, I was perched on top of the baggage. The Colonel, Adjutant and an Italian Liaison Officer, acting as guide, were in a Fiat. We followed them. Besides those mentioned, there was a Chaplain and a driver riding in a motorcycle with side car attached. The marching troops were soon left behind and we continued until we reached Codroipo where our Second Battalion and attached platoons awaited us. From their lips we learned of the hard chase they had given the Austrians with almost nothing to eat and no sleep for thirty-six hours. They were a tired lot but they were full of praise for "Daddy" Butler, the Red Cross man who distributed chocolate bars and cigarettes to them before they went over the top. Among their captures, was a great supply depot containing about two million dollars worth of military stores.

While we talked, the rest of the regiment came up and halted in the road. After some discussion it was agreed that hot supper from the rolling kitchens should be served to the Second Battalion before proceeding.

Returning to the automobile again, we set out after the Fiat. After riding several miles we reached a little, dark village where the occupants of the Fiat alighted from their car and

passed up the street. Seeing that we were to stop for a while, the Chaplain and I walked about the village hoping to find something for the inner man, since we had eaten nothing since noon.

There was an "Osteria" a short distance away where we were served sardines and "beautiful" fresh bread. When the Chaplain asked for the bill, the Signora smilingly answered: "Niente" (nothing). Seeing that things were cheap and wishing to take something to the drivers, the Chaplain asked for three more cans of sardines and some bread. While these were being brought, an English speaking Italian soldier approached and asked us if we would like some steak. We looked at each other in frank amazement, for we thought the country had been stripped of eatables. Recovering ourselves, we decided to try the steak. We laughed heartily over our luck as we consumed the delicious steak and bread and thought it fine to be treated like grand deliverers of these poor, abused people. While we dined, an Italian came from another room and asked the Chaplain his rank. The Chaplain answered truthfully. Since then we have wondered what effect that had on the conclusion of this episode, for when we asked for our bill, we heard not "Niente," but thirty liras, (\$6.00). The Chaplain dug deeply into his pocket, (only Chaplains have that much money) and we left with a dark, brown taste in our mouths. So much for deliverers.

Later, the Fiat passengers returned and we resumed our advance. After traveling some time, we began to see that our Italian guide did not know as much about these roads as he thought he did. He stopped frequently and with his flash light examined his map. It was now about midnight and the countryside was asleep. Notwithstanding this, upon arriving at a little village, we stopped before several houses, blew our horns, threw stones at the windows and called out, until finally a women replied. Not much was learned from her and, in disgust, the guide took his seat and we began to circle the neighborhood. We finally understood that he did not know where he was.

We wondered how the marching troops were standing the long march and also if they too would be marched in circles when they reached this point. I heard later that they did that very thing.

Eventually, our guide had a thought and we raced after the speeding Fiat through the dark, silent night, going at top speed to keep up with it and fearful that we would lose the motor-cycle which had no light. After much breathless racing about

we reached a town near Pozzuola. Both cars stopped in the town but, in a few minutes, the Fiat went on while we remained. We understood that we would go no further that night and as it was cold, we followed a streak of light coming from a building, the door of which was standing open. We found half a dozen men shelling corn. Over in the corner there was a large pile of corn cobs. Not long after, the men departed, kindly failing to put us out.

As our troops were nowhere in sight and no move seemed imminent, we took advantage of the pile of corn cobs. With the driver's three blankets, we three, Chaplain, Sergeant Major and Driver lay down side by side on the cobs and fell asleep.

The sound of a running motor awakened us and we sprang from the "bed" and out to the road. The driver was not around but he returned later with the news that the troops were close by. We joined them at Pozzuola.

They had not reached this point until nearly 4:00 A. M. and then when the command to halt was given, they were so tired and disgusted that some lay down in the muddy road and slept. The rest fell off to the side and pitched pup tents. All were exhausted.

And, dear Reader, the war in Italy was over. What was the object of this terrible march officially recorded as forty-three kilometers (27 miles) but more like thirty-five miles according to the men who marched it. We were rushing to no beleaguered Allies. Our presence at this point was not vital to anyone's safety. Was it to prove to the imbecile officers, Italian, English or American, who ordered it, that Americans could accomplish it? I wonder how many deaths could be traced to the miserable events of this night? How many tired, undernourished lads found the first "Flu" germs on the damp ground as they lay there exhausted after their struggles?

At ten o'clock, after a warm breakfast, the march was continued, and at noon, we halted at Lovario and went into billets. Resting here until noon the next day, we again resumed the march, covering the twelve miles to a field near Ipplis before evening.

The boys pitched tents and prepared for a short stay. Headquarters Detachment went on to Ipplis and procured an empty house. Some of us found a badly battered stone barn for the horses and gathered straw and made a comfortable bed on the second floor for ourselves. Not a window or door was in the place, and at night the wind swept up the valley whistling in the door and out of the windows. The Julian Alps were in plain view before us.

---

While here we formed an acquaintance with a friendly English speaking Italian who one evening took two of us to a supper of the Italian Sergeants Major. We could scarcely believe our eyes when soup, chicken, lettuce, cheese, bread and wine were brought in. At the same time, our mess sergeants were making life miserable for the Supply Company who, they claimed, were not delivering enough canned beef and hard tack!

On the eighth, we had a rumor that Germany was going to capitulate. On the tenth the Colonel left for Padua, the headquarters of the American Mission to Italy. We wondered what was in the air.

While at Ippis, the whole regiment was marched to the river where they bathed in the cold mountain water. Luckily the air was not cold on this November day.

On the eleventh, the German Armistice was signed and, on the twelfth, the Second Battalion packed up hurriedly and was rushed off to Dalmatia. We who remained also took up the march at 1:00 P. M. on the twelfth and proceeded to Cormons, Austria, having crossed the border line about 3:00 P. M.

## CHAPTER VI

**Cormons, Austria: From Cormons to Treviso**

ON ARRIVING AT CORMONS at the close of November 12th, the regiment pitched tents in the field close to town.

Regimental Headquarters and the Detachment found a two story building, cleaned it as usual, and occupied it.

The next morning was spent in ransacking the place which, from the maps, pamphlets and books, had evidently been the headquarters of the Austrian Police. One of the books found was called "Strafprozess," and was written in question and answer form, seemingly for the guidance of the police in examining questionable people.

In the yard of the building we found several rifles and much ammunition. A curious thing about the rifles was an inscription on the steel barrel which read, "Republicana Mexicana."

The boys in the companies had found a storehouse full of guns, knives and other implements of warfare and had collected quite a few souvenirs but the officers heard about it and ordered everything replaced. During the day the companies were marched to a barracks a short distance from town. This barracks is reputed to have been built by the Austrians in 1832. It was a decided improvement over pup-tents since the weather was very cold, damp and raw. It was difficult for Americans to procure fuel so a barracks was imperative.

Cormons has a population of about 6,000 and is a lively place for its size. While many Italians live here, German is spoken in most of the stores. In those owned by Austrians we were very coolly treated and one could readily see the glow of resentment beneath the sullen stares. However, with many Italian troops in the vicinity besides our own, no serious outbreak was feared. Nevertheless, the losers were by no means paralyzed, for, one night, a train full of Italian refugees was thrown from the tracks with serious consequences, due to malicious tampering with the rails. Again, on another night, our tranquil existence was thrilled by the clang of a fire bell. Running to the street we saw a primitive man-power hose-cart being pulled down the street. Following this we came to the scene of the fire which was one of the wings of a war hospital. It was the only wooden building in town and, fortunately, was unoccupied. The flames were beyond control of the "Fire Department,"



whose efforts consisted in trying to keep the fire from spreading to the other parts of the building. Of course, this fire was attributed to the Austrians.

With the German signature to the armistice, the war ended for us. Some dreamed that for them the famous saying, "Heaven, Hell or Hoboken by Christmas," would come true. It was intolerable to think that we would not be on the way at that time. Little drilling was done; only the necessary chores were performed. For the rest, we awaited orders and wrote letters. At this time the mail came in regularly and the news from home helped to pass the weary hours of waiting.

My "Buddy" pulled through the long march somehow, but a few days after reaching Cormons he complained of chills, and his body shook even while he sat next to a fire. We urged him to see the doctor, a few doors away, whose chief occupation these days seemed to be feeding wood to the Adjutant's stove. He hesitated. I believe he feared that he would be sent to the damp, gloomy hospital at Udine, away from all his friends. His condition showed no improvement and when his temperature was taken by a Medical Sergeant, it was so high that the **Sergeant** tagged him "Flu" and sent him to the hospital. It was the last time we saw him alive, this good pal who had been too plucky to drop out on the march when he must have felt that the march was killing him.

There was much influenza in Cormons, within the regiment and among the natives. We were made aware of this latter fact by the almost daily procession of priests, acolytes, mourners and bearers carrying the corpses which passed our door. In the hospital at Udine, five of our lads had died in four days and many in the regiment had heavy colds which caused much concern. The climate was miserably raw and cold. A novel and pleasant way to beat the "Flu" as practiced by some of the boys, was to keep their bodies warm with frequent doses of cognac.

When the regiment was at Vallegio, the subject of grapes was mentioned. During the maneuvers in the trenches with the Arditi, grapes were stolen from vineyards and the owners of these vineyards turned in bills for something like 24,000 liras (about \$4,000) against the Americans. Our Claim Officer would not agree to pay this amount and he succeeded in having it lowered about one half. Every man and officer was obliged to contribute. Officers were charged five liras, non-commissioned officers, four liras and privates three liras. Some of us never saw the vineyards; others had no objection to the tax.

This was but one of the many claims presented. The Italian attitude seemed to be that all Americans were millionaires and that it was their duty to get all they could from the Americans while "the getting was good."

On November 18th the Third Battalion packed up and entrained for Fiume to do international police duty. Gone then were the glimmering hopes of an early departure, for the rumor persisted and seemed to have foundation that the First Battalion and Headquarters were bound for Trieste. However, so I have heard, the Colonel prevailed upon the American Mission, at Padua, that our place was in Treviso where our supplies lay in warehouses.

Accordingly, early Sunday morning, November 24th, with great joy in our hearts, we were ready for the return to Treviso. The companies were to walk despite the thousands of Italian trucks standing idle. However, the packs were put upon American trucks so that they were unburdened to that extent.

Headquarters Detachment was fortunate in being allowed to ride upon the trucks which carried the office equipment and some officers' bedding rolls. The trip was one to be remembered.

When we started, the day was pleasantly brisk but not cold. Leaving at eight o'clock we traveled without adventure until we reached the Livenza River. Here the bridge had been blown up and a pontoon had been built in its place. When we started across an Italian Lieutenant stopped us, saying that the pontoon was not strong enough for our heavy trucks. All argument was of no avail. We were in a strange country and to make a detour of several miles, as he suggested, would cause us endless trouble. Even while we talked an Italian truck crossed the pontoon towing a second truck. We pointed to the two trucks crossing at one time, but we received only his maddening smile and a refusal. Some of the boys in the party were in favor of emulating one of our Sergeants who, during our advance, was bringing food to us. As the story goes, this Sergeant's trucks were approaching a pontoon when an Italian Colonel ran out with arms wildly waving, while he voiced a loud refusal. The Sergeant was a man of few words. He knew that the regiment was in need of food and he thought the pontoon was strong enough. Having faith in his judgment and cause, he displayed his automatic and, motioning the trucks forward, backed the Colonel across the whole pontoon. The pontoon creaked and trembled under the heavy trucks but, fortunately, no mishap occurred.

Our errand was not so urgent, so we turned about feeling very bitter, as this appeared to be just another instance of that

antagonism to which we had been subjected by the Italians since the day of the armistice.

After following the river for five or six miles we came to a bridge and crossed. It was now nearly dark and we should have been approaching Treviso. With evening, the weather grew colder and, as a pleasure party, our trip was a failure. We reached the Piave soon after and successfully crossed the creaking pontoon.

However, we had not gone a hundred yards beyond when, as we were climbing a hill, both trucks stopped. Upon investigating we learned that both had run out of gasoline. It was a peculiar coincidence.

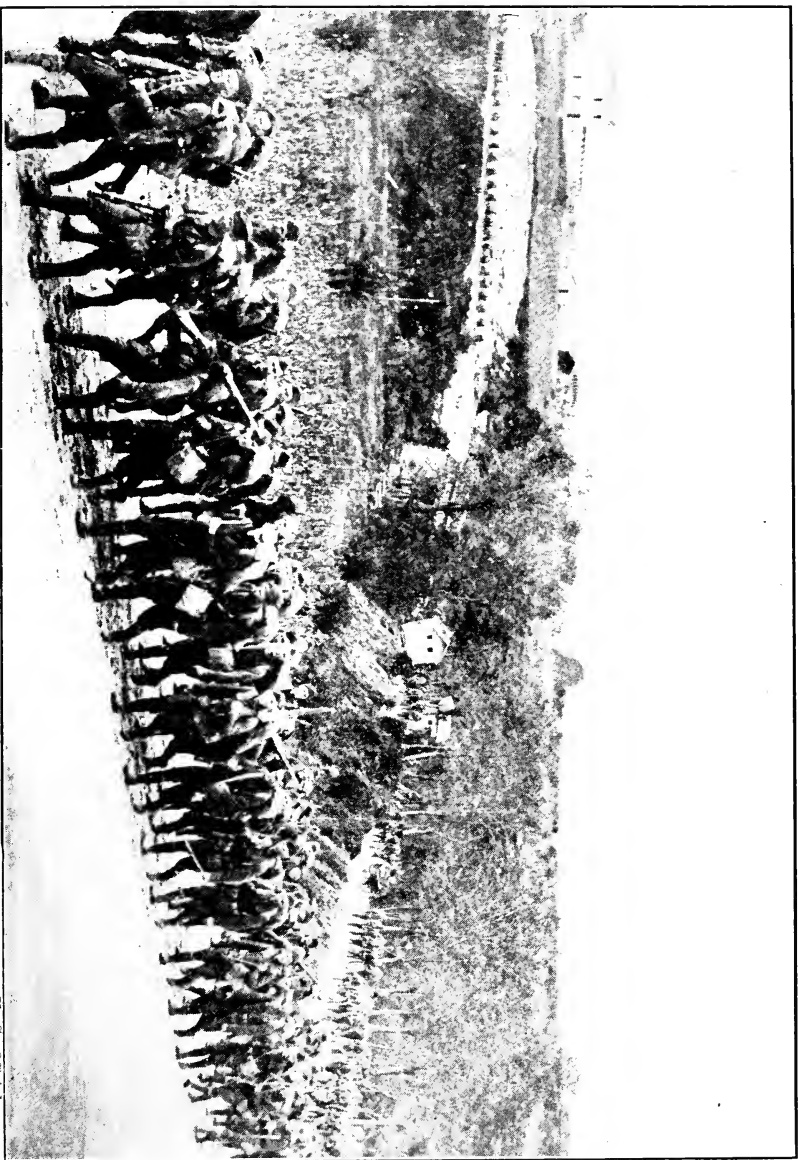
On either side of us were damp, clay embankments and all about was darkness. What should we do? We were in a strange country and in a poor part of that, so far as replenishing our gasoline supply went. We thought we could borrow a can from one of the many passing Italian FIATS, but no one seemed to have an extra can. Meanwhile, someone, rooting around among the packs and boxes on our truck found a three gallon can of gasoline, but that would not take us to Treviso which we were told was twenty miles away.

We again resumed our efforts to beg gasoline from the Italians, but when some time had passed without our efforts being rewarded, the boys in loud voices told the countryside what they thought of the Italian nation in general and these Italian drivers in particular. About this time we noticed a can of gasoline in the rear of a truck which had stopped close by. However, when we edged near to lift the gasoline, the driver suspected and moved the can. Fresh outbursts of American oratory hailed this failure but, out of the din rose a voice speaking the American language with a slight accent and the voice asked: "Who wants gasoline?" Before the speaker could have changed his mind, a half dozen answered: "Here!" As he came nearer we saw he had a five gallon can. We thanked this Italian who had been to America, loaded him down with cigarettes and poured the gasoline into our truck. With eight gallons we felt we could make Treviso. Bidding farewell to the occupants of the other truck, with a promise of speedy relief, we set forth.

Without a map we stumbled onward in the darkness. We had traveled several miles along a dark road when, upon reaching the end, we perceived a river but no bridge or pontoon. It was a delicate task to turn the large truck in the narrow road. Retracing our tracks we set out again, fearful now that our gasoline would become exhausted. To add to the discom-

fort, the snow fell and the night grew very cold. However, we were on the right road and at 10:00 P. M. we entered the gate at Treviso.

During this time the companies were walking to Treviso. On the first day of this tiresome march they covered twenty-seven kilometers. At seven the next morning the march was continued, without a rest for the noon meal, and at 5:00 P. M., another thirty-five kilometers were passed. Here the tired, foot-sore lads went into billets until 7:00 A. M. of the 27th when the march was resumed and thirty-eight more kilometers were marched. On November 28th, Thanksgiving Day, they enjoyed (?) a dinner of "slum," and reached Dosson, a suburb of Treviso at 4:20 P. M. The distance marched this day was thirty-two kilometers.



ON THE ROAD TO AUSTRIA

U. S. Official



## CHAPTER VII

## Treviso—After the Drive—Rome

ONCE INSIDE THE GATES we were happy despite our hunger and cold for both were soon forgotten and, in addition, the boys who had remained in Treviso to guard our stores and to forward supplies, shared their bunks with us.

It may be well to say a little more about these lads who had remained at our base. When the regiment marched to the front, there were about one hundred and fifty of them, but as men came from the hospitals and could not join us in Austria, this "Casual Detachment," as it came to be known, doubled in numbers and occupied all available space. At the time of our unexpected arrival they had a fairly elastic organization accustomed to serving meals at all hours.

Treviso had now taken on a different aspect by day and by night. The war being over, many citizens had returned. The market place livened up on market days and the boards came off the house windows. The stores opened but, at noon, according to custom, they closed from twelve to two while the shop-keepers retired to their beds. At night, with no fear of air raids, shades were not pulled down and the street lights were lit, while Italian soldiers singing "O Sole Mio," and other favorites made the nights cheery.

Besides Americans, there were British and Italian soldiers in Treviso. With the many soldiers and the great number of citizens returning home, it was difficult to obtain a building for Regimental Headquarters. So, it was not until the fifth day after returning to Treviso that we found a home, which provided room for four offices and sleeping quarters for the Detachment and the Band.

The line companies of the First Battalion were stationed in an Italian barracks. They had little to do other than the usual fatigue and a small amount of drilling. Most of the afternoon and evening was free but, with the lack of amusement, the hours hung heavily. Later the Y. M. C. A. helped with a reading room and canteen, and the English, who had leased a theatre, entertained us with shows and movies.

Many walked across country in search of souvenirs, visiting prison camps and battle fields in the region of the Piave, and before long, barracks bags were filled with shells, copper paper

knives, Austrian helmets and even rifles and swords. With plenty of time, a great fad of decorating shells took hold and some beautifully decorated shells resulted.

Our pleasures and anticipations, however, were tempered with sorrow, for during the latter part of November there was a funeral nearly every day. My friend died November 27th and he and another friend were buried November 29th. The bodies, in boxes draped with the American flag, were placed in a truck, the band played a funeral march and the sorrowful procession started. Besides the Band and truck there were in the procession the Chaplain, the firing squad, the pallbearers and the friends of the deceased.

At the Italian cemetery we advanced to a corner where there were many new, unpainted crosses on the tops of which were nailed the aluminum identification discs worn by every soldier. The Chaplain read his prayers over the remains, the bodies were lowered, and thus ended the earthly career of these brave lads who were never to see their loved ones in this life. Two new wooden crosses were added to the others, and later, two little numbered stones were placed on the graves. The Band formed and as it marched up the street, struck up a lively march according to custom.

Shortly after we were in receipt of a communication from Earl Cavan, who had commanded our Army Corps during the drive. In his letter he commended the regiment on its conduct and awarded the regiment the English Distinguished Service Order.

At this time the good feeling which had existed between the Italian and American soldiers threatened to end. Many of us thought that the original cause was cigarettes and tobacco. In the first place, when the Americans received permission to bring cigarettes and tobacco into Italy, the Italian Government insisted that none be sold to Italians. Therefore, when the doughboys came from the "Y" and the Commissary with cigarettes, the Italians, who could buy only twenty of the atrocious Macedonian cigarettes a week from their stores, wished to purchase American cigarettes. Now the Americans could not sell them to the Italians without violating the command of the Italian Government. However, finding that they could not buy cigarettes, the Italians began to beg them. At first the boys were generous, but eventually, an American could not step from his billet without finding several Italians waiting to say: "Cigaretta?" It grew tiresome, this "Cigaretta?" and when an American hot-head met an Italian hot-head, the inevitable resulted. The feeling thus started spread



in other directions. The people of Europe, Italians not excepted, seemed to think it legitimate to grossly overcharge when the opportunity arose. In some of the Italian stores there are signs which read, "Fixed Prices," but, like many signs, they meant nothing. The way to buy in Italy is to ask the price of an article and upon obtaining it, divide it by two, three or four and, if you really want the article, haggle and walk toward the door several times until the storekeeper comes near your price. This was an unusual method for Americans and much ill will resulted.

When the Americans entered Italy an agreement was made between the two governments as to amounts and kinds of food the Italian government was to furnish the American soldiers. After we were in Italy, there were times, of course, when certain articles were not available and therefore could not have been issued to the Americans. However, as the Supply Company men know, there were other times when the Italians refused to issue foodstuffs on the ground that they did not have them. The American Sergeants refused to believe them and upon forcing their way into the Italian Commissary, found the foodstuffs there.

On another occasion the Paying Officer and his assistants placed their safe, with money for the troops at Fiume and Cattaro, in an Italian railroad car. American guards were placed with the safe. Officious Italians, with no justifiable reason, put guard and money off the car. Rather than create trouble, the American Captain was man enough to hold his peace for the time. The matter was taken up with the Italian authorities and the Captain finally succeeded in getting his money to the men.

On other occasions, I have been told, it was only the backbone of the American boys in charge of the American mail that prevented sneering Italian officials from cutting open and going through the mail bags containing not only personnel mail, but United States Government official mail.

These matters were generally adjusted but no guarantee seemed capable of preventing a recurrence. It seemed to many of us from the treatment accorded Americans, that the United States of America was a fourth rate power cringing and begging for the good will of powerful, majestic Italy. Possibly, and I prefer to think it, the government of Italy was doing all for us that it could. I believe that our troubles arose from officers below the rank of General who were tainted with Bolshevism and saturated with self-importance. It seemed, also, that some of the higher American Officers cared more for the smile of an Italian official than for their countrymen's welfare.

In the early part of December it was decided to send about forty convalescent soldiers of the Third Battalion, together with the mail and baggage, to Fiume. Accordingly, arrangements were made for them to leave on a fast train Saturday, December 14th. However, the time of departure was postponed, by the Italians, to the next morning and then, again, put off until the afternoon. At 2 P. M. the sick soldiers arrived at the station to enter their box cars which stood on a siding. Strange to say, when inquiry was made not an Italian official knew anything about the disposal of these cars. It was finally decided that they would go forward Monday morning.

At this time the boys boarded the box cars and at noon the train left Treviso. After a few miles it was held up for two hours and at Cassarsa, the engine put the cars on a siding and departed. It was a cold, damp night and the box cars were poor shelter for sick men.

Tuesday morning came but there was no sign of an engine and the Station Officials could not say when a train for Fiume would arrive. In the afternoon the cars were moved along about ten miles and here again the officials knew nothing.

Hearing that the Rome-Trieste express came through Portogruaro, the American Lieutenant in charge decided to send all but six men on the express. The officials made out the necessary passes and when the express arrived the men boarded it. However, an Italian policeman ordered them off and was supported by an Italian Colonel who said enlisted men were not allowed to ride on the express.

The Lieutenant appealed to the Station Master who then admitted that the Colonel was right. The American explained that the men were sick but he received only insults and refusal from the officious Colonel.

The Station Master promised another train that evening but none arrived and on Thursday the Lieutenant, thoroughly angry, wired a higher official and at 3 P. M. the cars moved out of Portogruaro.

Again that night the cars were side tracked but the Lieutenant quickly obtained action here and with several more delays finally reached Fiume at noon, December 21st.

Instead of a ten or twelve hour ride, five days and five nights were required to make the trip. That is a sample of the treatment which makes the 332nd anxious for another war in Italy.

After the English had left Treviso the American "Y" leased the town theatre for vaudeville, band concerts and pictures. Our band gave several grand concerts here which were greatly enjoyed. Incidentally, the "Y" made itself popular with the

boys by charging them to hear their own band play. The interior of the theatre consisted of an orchestra and several tiers of boxes instead of a gallery and balcony as in our theatres.

Just before Thanksgiving, nine men dressed in German civilian clothes made of paper, came into our midst. They were thoroughly questioned and examined and it was established beyond doubt that they were American soldiers wounded and captured in the Chateau Thierry drive. They had been sent across France and Germany into Poland, along with hundreds of other prisoners. They did not complain of their treatment at the hands of the Germans but said they had not obtained proper food nor proper medical attention. They told of operations undergone without anaesthetics. At their first opportunity they had made their escape.

A few weeks later an American Captain found his way into Treviso and his story brought out the fact that he had been Commander of some of the nine men mentioned above. He was greatly surprised to find American soldiers in Italy.

The Red Cross assisted us materially. From their great supplies they gave us blankets, pajamas, socks, sweaters and much food. We had been unable to obtain potatoes for several weeks but the Red Cross furnished us with them.

As the censorship was off the mail, many began to send home souvenirs and, sometimes, the postoffice had to refuse Austrian helmets, for the office was full of them.

About the first of December we received a red, white and green service stripe from the Italian government which denoted four months service on the Italian front. This was immediately christened the "Macaroni Bar." A few days later, December 8th, we received the American gold "V" for six months overseas service.

Christmas, which we had so fondly hoped would see us on the way home, at last came. During the day nothing special occurred, except that the Christmas boxes from home were distributed and this served to impress the thought of home more firmly upon the mind.

However, there were many private celebrations and, at 6:30 P. M. about twenty of us filed into the "Dining Room" and prepared to partake of a real Christmas dinner. The splendid meal consisted of soup, fish, mashed potatoes, turkey, dressing, gravy, sweet corn, bread, butter, pumpkin pie, corn starch pudding with peaches and cream, coffee, wine, champagne and fruit punch. The whole was most excellently prepared by a quartette of the best cooks who ever donned a khaki uniform. During the evening, speeches, stories and songs obliterated the mean

walls and took us back home to our dear America. It was a most successful dinner and Christmas night.

Many rumors filled the air these days. Some said we were going to Fiume, some said Trieste, while others, more imaginative, said the Balkans. All seemed agreed, however, that home was in the distant future.

With few exceptions, the life in Treviso was a humdrum existence. The rest after the strenuous days before the armistice, was very welcome, but the long idleness gave the men too much time to think of home. Naturally, they became discontented. This frame of mind was capable of producing mischief, so, in the early part of December, passes were given to Venice, Milan and other nearby towns. Venice, just nineteen miles away, drew most of the visitors. Since railways were owned by the government, no fare was paid by the military; a pass from the Commanding Officer with the regimental stamp being all the authority required. The conductors could not read English, so the boys unable to obtain authorized passes, made their own and these were accepted so long as they bore a signature.

In December we learned that President Wilson would be in Rome, January 3rd, 1919, so on January 1st a detachment consisting of the Band and an Honor Guard of twenty-five were sent to greet him. After a twenty-four hour ride, we reached the "Eternal City" and were shown to an Italian barracks and later to the Red Cross quarters which were more satisfactory.

With a consuming desire to see the great city, we were soon on our way to St. Peter's and the Vatican and their many wonders which, however, I shall not here attempt to describe.

In the morning of January 3rd, we prepared to welcome the President. Our Band and Guard, we learned with dismay, were not considered by the Italians to be necessary in the parade of welcome. So, this pleasure being denied them, the boys planned a welcome of their own and the thin column of Yanks attempted to break through the mass of people at Via Nazionale. These spectators, a score deep, were held off the street by a solid cordon of soldiers, which reached from the station to the President's palace. The soldiers seeing the Americans endeavor to break through the line called for reinforcements, but Italy has neglected football and in a few minutes the thin American column was over the line, was reformed, and was marching up Via Nazionale amid the applause of the Romans and the discomfiture of the Italian officers. At the station the khaki clad column formed its own cordon of welcome.

Rome was in holiday attire this morning. Via Nazionale the main business street, was ablaze with Italian and American flags and with standards of the Italian provinces. Rome had not seen such crowds in days.

Just before 10:00 A. M., the cabinet members, Senators, Deputies, General Diaz, Admiral DiRevel, the American Ambassador and other Ambassadors, arrived at the station, followed shortly by the King of Italy. A fanfare of trumpets sounded as the train arrived and "The Star Spangled Banner" was played. King and President shook hands and the various presentations were made. Amid continuous and frenzied applause, waving flags and handkerchiefs, the party passed slowly down Via Nazionale to the Quirinal Palace which the Italians had given over to the President.

The next morning the Band and Guard marched to the residence of the American Ambassador, Thomas N. Page, where President Wilson was giving luncheon to the Italian King. The band was to play during the meal and the "Honor Guard," at last was given a chance to honor the President.

About 12:30 P. M., the shouts of the people who lined the streets proclaimed the popularity and approach of the President. As his party entered the courtyard, the opening strains of "The Star Spangled Banner," greeted him and he smiled broadly as he passed.

Within a few minutes the King and Queen of Italy arrived, followed by Italian statesmen and high army officers among whom was General Diaz, the idol of the Italians.

The large dining table to which all repaired was beautifully decorated with huge clusters of red and white flowers. At both ends of the hall the American and Italian colors were hung, side by side, emblematic of the manner in which Italian and American had stood throughout the great war so gloriously ended.

After the luncheon, when the guests had departed, someone remembered that the Band and Guard had not eaten and we were led to the same dining table used by the elite. For the benefit of the rest of the regiment who were not present, I give the menu: Roast pigeon, steak, cake, ice cream, champagne, etc., etc.

We had expected to remain in Rome for several days but, to our astonishment and disappointment, we were ordered the next morning to get ready to take the noon train to Treviso. We had seen enough of Rome, however, to put firmly in our hearts the desire to return.

## CHAPTER VIII

**The Third Battalion at Fiume**

**B**EFORE RETURNING TO TREVISO, let us peep at the Third Battalion at Fiume and the Second Battalion at Cattaro.

When the former hurriedly entrained at Cormons, they were taken to Fiume, arriving there November 19th.

Their duty was to aid in the international policing of this difficult territory. Fiume, since the armistice, was jealously watched by both Italy and the new Jugo-Slav state. The real issue probably was, and is, that the Jugo-Slavs consider this port indispensable to their future while the Italians think they should have Fiume as a reward for their share in the war. This being understood, it will be easier to comprehend what difficulties the Americans labored under in a work in which they had no material interest.

After the Third Battalion detrained at Fiume, the boys were forced to wait an hour before an Italian officer presented himself to conduct them to their billets. The reception of the people of the town seemed very diffident and it appeared to be an Italian town from the number of Italian flags flying. No other flag was seen.

In the evening, at a meeting presided over by the Allied Commander, an Italian General, the American Commanding Officer was required to furnish two companies of Americans the next morning for duty in two adjoining towns, Susac and Trsat. The men were to go armed. No trouble was anticipated although the towns were held by troops of Jugo-Slav nationality or persuasion.

Early on the following morning, "K" and "M" companies marched to an Italian barracks and the Italian General in command placed the two companies under two Italian Majors so that the American Captains, outranked, had no authority. This detestable practice of placing a higher Italian officer over the highest ranking American officer present was a favorite play of the Italians.

Not content with this procedure, a platoon was taken from each of the two American companies and placed under command of Italian Captains. Susac was then entered by two separate columns each led by an Italian Captain commanding an American platoon. Italian armored cars proceeded the infantry.

The remainder of the American companies were split up, Americans being placed in Italian companies under the command of Italian officers. The next move was to place the two American Captains with the Italian Major thereby depriving them of all direct authority.

Fortunately, no trouble was encountered. It seemed that the Jugo-Slav people believed the American soldiers would be true to the principles enunciated by their President.

The other town, Trsat was likewise occupied, after which the Americans were divided into small groups of from ten to twenty men, who with the same number of Italians, patrolled the two towns.

The Americans immediately became friendly with the Jugo-Slavs. This was not pleasing to the Italians but the American doughboy bestows his friendship where he pleases.

These troops occupied this territory for several days. Then, all but about one hundred Americans were withdrawn and on December 18th, these men were called in, as the Interallied Military Police, consisting of English, Italian and American soldiers, were placed in charge.

Fiume is an old city, having been known in Roman times. There is, in fact, a Roman triumphant arch built by Claudius II. The modern city of 39,000 population sits in a sort of amphitheatre between the hills and the shore of the Gulf of Quarnera. A large export business contributes largely to Fiume's prosperity as is evident from the wharves, warehouses and steamships to be seen here. It is said that 7,500 emigrants passed through Fiume in 1902 which makes Fiume the cosmopolitan town it is.

With such activities at its gate, it is not surprising to see the many imposing public buildings such as the Governor's palace, the Austrian Emperor's palace and the many large schools and churches. In the northwest part of the city there are fine public gardens.

As intimated above, there are two parts of the town, New Fiume and Old Fiume. New Fiume is a busy, bustling place with wide, clean streets which reminded the boys of American cities. Old Fiume, however, which is entered through a huge archway, is different. It contains most of the Italian portion of the population and its dark, odoriferous, covered alleys have a medieval air about them. Gloomy, vaulted passages lead from one crooked street to another still more crooked, and a walk through these strange byways was delightful in the surprises met at every step. One saw first a bazaar, then a market scene or an old monument and again, a fountain or a dilapi-

dated old door with a coat of arms. At every turn, as in Italy, there is a little, dark odorous wine room, but the crowd inside is always loud and happy with dances or dice games. The shops in this quarter are open in front. Here is a corn dealer beside an old clothes store, while next door is an image maker. Nearby is a barber shop with its owner in the doorway sharpening his razor. Across the street is a macaroni shop and an artificial flower store.

The fine cafes of Fiume attracted many Americans, for aside from their wares, exquisite Hungarian music was offered and its appealing strains were as enjoyable here as when translated to the American light opera stage.

It was no surprise, therefore, that the American soldiers, fresh from the small towns of Italy and the rigorous campaign, should fall in love with Fiume, especially since the Jugo-Slavs tried to make life so pleasant for them. The girls were very popular with the soldiers and before the battalion left Fiume, there were several weddings.

The regimental band was sent for and on several nights dances were held which were greatly enjoyed. At first, the girls could not understand the American way of dancing, but it was not long before they were one-stepping and fox-trotting as if they had never danced otherwise. In fact, to hear the story from the lips of a Third Battalion soldier, the young ladies of Fiume threw their hearts at the Americans' feet.

The American soldier in Europe was peculiarly slow to take offense, but once he was aroused, he was as difficult to handle as a disturbed nest of hornets. There were several street fights between Americans and Italians and the remarkable fact is that no one on either side was killed or even seriously injured.

Since we have returned to America, we have read of the scuffles between French and Italians in Fiume and the resulting casualties. It becomes evident, therefore, that our Colonel was justified in complimenting the men of the 332nd on their gentlemanly conduct.

One of the stories concerning these fights is as follows: An American was standing on the street talking with a Jugo-Slav girl who wore the Jugo-Slav colors on her waist. An Italian soldier came up and snatched the colors from her and threw them to the ground. The American did what any red-blooded man would do—he knocked the Italian down. At this, several other Italian soldiers came, handcuffed the American, placed him under arrest and took him to prison. As soon as this became known to the American Commanding Officer, he demanded the man's release. The soldier was not only re-



leased but the Italian General also insisted on apologizing for the Italian soldier's mistake.

On another occasion, so I heard, the American Lieutenant Colonel, who was in command of the Americans in Fiume, saw the flags of the Allies flying in the air with the Italian flag uppermost. He thereupon informed the Italian Commander that no flag was good enough to fly above the "Stars and Stripes" and the Italian must have thought the same, for the Italian flag was soon placed at the same level as the other flags.

With Company dances, a minstrel show and the diversions offered by the town itself, time was not heavy. Very little drilling was done.

Just before Christmas, a detail of eight men was sent to Trieste where they were to assist an American Colonel in checking food supplies which the Civilian Relief was sending into Austria for the starving population. They were engaged in this work for about two months.

As in Trieste, so in Fiume, the friendship between the Doughboys and the "Gobs" became very strong. Throughout their stay at Fiume American naval vessels were in or near the harbor of Fiume.

The English soldiers also became quite friendly with the Americans as had been the case in Treviso.

An interesting trip to Vienna was made by four officers and one hundred men who convoyed a trainload of flour to Vienna. Of course, American soldiers were a curiosity in the Austrian capital but they were well treated, for had they not brought the flour which the Austrians so sorely needed? While in Vienna, permission was granted them to visit the Emperor's palace, a visit which was greatly enjoyed.

On the return to Fiume, the train was stopped at an Austrian winter resort where some of the Americans had their first taste of skiing.

At last, on February 12th, the Battalion rolled up its packs, said goodbye in several languages to the weeping population of Fiume, boarded its "side-door pullmans," and set out for Genoa. They left heavy hearts behind them for the Jugo-Slavs truly loved them, and, when they had gone, I'm sure the Jugo-Slavs realized that truer champions of purer ideals never wore the uniforms of soldiers.

The trip by train took the boys through the battle scarred fields of northern Italy, ending on February 15th at Genoa, where the battalion joined the First Battalion at the Hotel Miramare.

## CHAPTER IX

**The Second Battalion in Montenegro and Dalmatia**

THE READER WILL REMEMBER that the Second Battalion suddenly took down its pup-tents, rolled up its packs and hastily departed from the regiment at Ippolis on November 12th, 1918. The rumor said they were bound for Montenegro.

The first portion of the journey was by trucks to Mestre which was reached at 2:00 A. M. November 13th. The boys slept in the trucks until morning and, at noon, billets were assigned them.

On the 15th, a platoon of "G" Company departed for Fiume. It is said that when the Italians attempted to enter Fiume after the armistice was signed, they saw so many Jugoslav guns pointed their way that the expedition was called off until Americans could be found to land first. All felt sure that the Slavs would not fire upon Americans. So the "G" Company platoon led and the Italians followed behind this shield. The platoon remained in Fiume until the Third Battalion began to come in, when they rejoined their company at Zelenika.

On November 16th, at 10:30 A. M., the whole battalion having reached Mestre, trains were boarded which took the troops to Venice. Here, after some hours, the captured Austrian Red Cross ship, "Argentine," received them and at 2:00 P. M. November 18th, the vessel moved out of the harbor of Venice and proceeded down the Adriatic to Cattaro, Dalmatia.

The ship docked here at noon on the 21st and the Americans received a great welcome and band concert from the natives, Montenegrins, Slavs, Serbs, Poles and Austrians.

Dalmatia is a narrow strip of land between the Adriatic and the Dinaric Alps. Cattaro is situated between the Montenegrin mountains and the Bocche de Cattaro, a beautiful inlet of the Adriatic and is the most important harbor on the Dalmatian coast. Its population in 1900 was 3,021.

Dalmatia, like Fiume, was a bone of contention between Italy and the Slavs. Besides, after the armistice, a revolution threatened in Montenegro. While we were never told why Americans were sent to Dalmatia, the reason must lie in the above facts.

Company "F" debarked at 3:00 P. M. of the 22nd and was immediately ordered to Cetinje, Montenegro by the ever-present

Italian General. Companies E, G, H and detachments of Headquarters, Machine Gun, Supply, and Medical organizations, landed on the 24th. Companies "E" and "G" boarded American sub-chasers and were taken down the bay about fifteen miles to the town of Zelenika, an Austrian submarine base. Company "H" and the Detachments remained in Cattaro where Battalion Headquarters was established.

Company "F" under its captain began the march over the mountains to the Montenegrin capital, a few miles away. En route, a battalion of Italians joined the Americans. When near Cetinje, the march was halted on account of the Italians who had been refused admittance to Cetinje a few days before when they had promised to leave that vicinity. Now, according to the theory of the boys, at least, they were attempting to use the Americans as a shield to enter the capital and occupy it. When the American Captain saw how matters stood, he made no attempt to lead his men into the city. After remaining a few days outside Cetinje, he decided to return and finally went to Teodo, Dalmatia, where his company was billeted. Here the company was put to work dismantling Austrian warships. It was a wonderful opportunity for enlarging one's souvenir collection and, I understand, the opportunity was not overlooked.

The duties assigned Companies "E" and "G" at Zelenika were quite different from "F" Company's. When they came into Zelenika they found the filthiest spot in Europe and, as usual, the characteristic American order to "Police up," was given. The barracks had been occupied by Russian prisoners several of whom were found in the building—dead. Between the barracks, dead horses also were found and all about was filth and debris.

Not content with making the town sanitary, those of a mechanical bent made the necessary repairs to the water and electric lighting plants and soon both conveniences were at their disposal.

The natives up in the nearby mountains were a playful lot. Many evenings, in the exuberance of their feelings, they celebrated by shooting machine guns. No one ever accused them of aiming them, but it happened that on several evenings a rain of bullets came into the town, so the Americans were sent up into the mountains to find the happy ones. After much hiking, the gun was found and the celebrating ceased.

Besides these tasks, the warehouses were guarded and the peace of the town maintained. The chance for recreation here, as well at Teodo and Cattaro, was very meagre. In this respect Dalmatia offered a great contrast to Fiume. Now and then

a game of basketball was played at Cattaro, but on the whole, time passed slowly until the mail service was established, which helped considerably.

Much has been said about the rations received by the boys in Dalmatia and the balance of the regiment was inclined to brand the Second Battalion a lot of discontents. However, too many men of unquestionable character have said that the rations were far from normal to allow such an impression to remain. In the words of an American Major who investigated these alleged conditions: "This ration (the standard ration fixed for American troops serving in the Italian Army, as we were) has **not** been issued to the United States troops." His statement follows with a list of articles which were not issued. He said: "The meat is of very inferior grade," and "It is sometimes diseased." "Canned meat is old, some issues being put up in the year 1913." "The issues of macaroni and of rice are frequently wormy."

Several men were marked "Quarters" because of the ragged condition of their uniforms and others wore raincoats on sunny days to cover their torn breeches. Some of the officers gave men their own clothes. It has also been said that when the French soldiers came to Cattaro, they would not believe that the ragged soldiers were Americans. Many were marked "Quarters" on account of their shoes and I have heard that one lad had boards tied to the bottom of his shoes to keep his feet off the earth. These conditions, especially regarding clothing, were alleviated before the boys left Dalmatia.

The impressions received by the boys were not flattering to the country. "It was dirty, ill kept and contaminated," they said. "The men were very lazy and the women did all the work that was done. The men dressed up and sat in the wine or coffee rooms telling stories throughout the day. The women were held as slaves and it was a common sight to see them descending the mountains with loads of wood upon their backs large enough for a mule to carry."

One day, some of the boys were talking to a bridegroom of a month. The asked him how he was getting along with his wife. "Oh," he replied quickly, "Me get along fine now; this wife supports me better than the first one did."

On another occasion, a rainy day, a man and a woman were walking along the street. The man carried an umbrella over his precious self while his worthy spouse trotted along at his side, in the rain, carrying a large bundle of wood upon her back.

Like the Yanks in every other section, the Second Battalion was busy collecting souvenirs. One Sunday, three Machine Gun men were taking apart a one-pound shell which they intended to carry home as a souvenir. Suddenly the shell exploded scattering deadly fragments. Two of the boys were badly torn while the wounds of the third were not so severe. They were rushed to a Serbian Hospital where the American doctors performed operations upon them. However, despite every care, one died the next day and another expired on the day following. The third was removed to a Red Cross hospital and eventually recovered.

This event served to further sadden the already gloomy Christmas.

On January 7th, 1919, Company "F" was again ordered to Cetinje to quell a disturbance between the followers of the former king and the adherents of the existing government. The trip was full of excitement and some danger although the boys were inclined to view it as a comic opera revolution.

The Americans had a delicate task to perform in attempting to stop a revolution without hurting anyone's feelings. While they marched over the mountain road, shots were heard up in the craggy mountain sides. The Captain was leading his company in a captured Austrian automobile and in advancing, the car got between the fire of the two rival groups. Later, a flag of truce was waved which was immediately greeted with shots, but, finally, the truce was effected.

At a meeting attended by the rival leaders, the revolutionists gladly accepted an offer of safe conduct to their homes. They were also given employment at Cattaro unloading food supplies from American ships. Thus the comic opera revolution came to an end and the stalwart natives dressed in their peculiar black caps with the red top, huge blue trousers stopping at the knees and high boots, gaily waved American flags and cheered the doughboys. Many of them had been to America so that they spoke some English. The Americans, in fact, were held in such esteem, that the natives sent a deputation to the American Commanding Officer with the request that he rule over Montenegro until a new government was set up.

Company "F" returned to its station after its romantic adventure where it co-operated with the French and Serbian troops in policing that territory.

Sometime before the boys left Montenegro, a small detachment of Americans were sent to Brindisi, Italy, across the Adriatic from Cattaro, and through the assistance of these men, supplies came regularly to the Battalion.

No more exciting events took place and the boys settled down to the dull wait for the glad day when the order would come that would release them from Dalmatia. At last, early in March, the good word came and on the 5th, the Battalion said goodbye to the beautiful but gloomy Dalmatian coast and after four days on the sea, joined the first and Third Battalions at Genoa.

## CHAPTER X

## Treviso to Genoa

UPON RETURNING FROM ROME we found Treviso to be the same old, muddy, rainy town. From the splendors of Rome to old Treviso was a far cry but, after all, Treviso was "home" to us. Everything, so far as going home and the daily routine were concerned, was the same as before our departure.

The Red Cross nurses at Padua made a few evenings happy for doughboys by having dances and luncheons there, and the nurses of Base Hospital No. 102 at Vicenza helped to keep the officers from losing their grace and conversational faculties.

In the middle of January we understood that our Divisional Commander was coming to inspect us and this appeared to be an omen of an early departure. However, we waited in vain.

Besides these few entertainments and occasional trips to nearby cities, the boys had nothing to do but eat chestnuts and sample unknown vinos. The band helped with an occasional concert and the "Y" with movies now and then.

Field Hospital No. 331, which had come with us from France was situated a few miles from Treviso in a large hospital building. The health of the boys was again very good and the task of caring for the sick was not great.

The most serious cases were sent to Base Hospital No. 102 located in historic Vicenza. Despite the fact that the nurses at this hospital were forced to take walks to keep warm, because of the lack of fuel, this hospital in charge of the Army Nurse Corps was very popular with the 332nd.

On the 10th of February the Adjutant entered our office, looked me straight in the eye and exclaimed: "You're leaving for Genoa tomorrow!"

Genoa! A sea-port! We in the office, looked at each other with shining faces for, Genoa spelled H-O-M-E to us. After further conversation with the Adjutant, I learned that six of us were going as an Advance Party to assist in billeting our troops when they arrived in Genoa.

We started immediately and reached Milan the next morning after a cold, sleepless night in the little compartment and learned at the English Transportation Office that a train left for Genoa at 12:45 P. M. That gave us about five hours to get a wash, a warm meal and left enough time to visit the venerable cathedral and the lovely Galleria Vittoria.

Our route lay along the Mediterranean coast. The beauties of craggy mountain and blue sea were before us except only,

now and then, when they were interrupted by the eternal tunnels without which, it seems, one cannot travel ten miles in Italy. We felt that we were going to enjoy our stay at Genoa which we reached about 6:00 P. M.

Wondering where we were going to spend the night, we were overjoyed to see two Sergeants of the Third Battalion advance party who had come to meet us.

The stately Hotel Miramare came into view as we turned the corner from the station. High up on the hillside, this massive stone structure stood, a fine looking hotel and a work of art. The desire to see its interior helped us climb the steep hill and when we stood within its marble reception hall and saw its magnificence, we were fearful that a mistake had been made. We could not believe that doughboys were to have this palace for their billet.

The rooms were stripped of beds, carpets and furniture but there were hundreds of mattresses and sheets. Sheets for the 332nd! It was astounding. Upstairs we found suites of rooms with baths attached. It was too much. We took our blankets from our packs and fell into the beds provided by our thoughtful friends.

We spent the next day in obtaining the capacity of the hotel. That meant, how many of the single mattresses being carried in by the Italian soldiers could be put down side by side in a room.

On the second day in Genoa, February 13th, as I sat upon the balcony of the hotel writing a letter, I had to remove my blouse because of the hot sun. Looking up from the letter I saw the blue Mediterranean stretching away in the distance and, nearer, as one looks from the sea to the land behind, Genoa rises on the hillsides like an amphitheatre with the harbor as the stage. The buildings of the city are of stone and the castles and other fortlike structures silhouetted against the clear, blue Italian sky make an unforgettable picture. These structures are several hundred feet above my position while the street is at least 150 feet below. In the hotel garden are spreading palms and other tropical trees.

A few days later all of the First and Third Battalions had arrived via train and we were at home in our new quarters. The elite Miramare which, it was said, had once entertained the Emperor of Germany, now presented a strange appearance. Doughboys slept in every corner in which a mattress could be placed, in the rooms and the hallways. But even those who slept in the hallways were happy, for was this not their last Italian billet?



The companies each day took hikes across the city to the charming Lido where a small amount of drilling was done.

In the offices, especially the Personnel, the work was very heavy as everyone was anxious to be ready when the word came to board the ship. However, all had time to explore Genoa, "The Superb," during these sunny days which were such a delightful change from foggy, rainy Treviso.

We found opera houses, good restaurants and cabarets here. It was the opera season and many enjoyed old favorites such as ; "Lucia di Lammermoor" and "Il Trovatore" as well as lesser known ones such as, "The Masked Ball" and "The Loreley." The singers were very good.

Naturally, it was much easier to live in Genoa since it was a fair sized city with the diversions of the modern city. Along with the good, however, there was all the immorality of a large city, to which Genoa was no exception. Besides, on the 2nd of February, a party of fifty men were given passes to Rome.

On February 28th the regiment was presented with a beautiful large flag of St. George, by the Genoese. The Colonel received a gold medal, several officers received silver ones and about a hundred men received bronze ones.

On March 1st, a few of the much looked for insignias or shoulder patches arrived. Since the regiment was on detached service in Italy, we were permitted to select our own insignia and the Lion of St. Mark was chosen because our time had been spent chiefly in the old Venetian territory. A gold Lion of St. Mark with its paws holding the book on which was inscribed in gold, 332, all on a red background, made up this brilliant insignia, destined to be the most admired in the entire A. E. F.

A walk about Genoa reveals many beautiful palaces and churches. The galleries of these palaces contain some of the finest paintings in the world, such artists as Titian, Van Dyke, Murillo, Guido Reni, Rubens and Tintoretto being represented. In the Palazzo Bianco are memorials of Columbus among which are photos of his letters. Here is also the violin of the famous Paganini.

Of the churches, the Byzantine black and white San Lorenzo, founded in the 10th century, is most noteworthy. One of the side altars is very pretty and among its treasures is a small marble casket said to contain the remains of St. John the Baptist. Women are allowed in this chapel only one day of the year. In the choir are notable seats of inlaid wood, one of which, the guide said, had been Paganini's.

Genoa having been the birthplace of Columbus, a marble statue of the great discoverer was erected in 1862 in the Piazza

Aequaverde. The remains of the house in which he was born about 1451 is still visible and is but five minutes walk from the center of the city.

During the last few days the mail from home had brought newspaper clippings describing the alleged terrible conditions under which the 332nd was living, especially at Cattaro. A Congressman having in his possession letters from members of the regiment describing these conditions had charged on the floor of the House of Representatives that the boys were forced to steal food and were without decent clothes, etc. Close on the heels of the arrival of these papers a Colonel from General Headquarters, France, had reported to our regiment for the purpose of investigating these charges. This he proceeded to do by examining several hundred men individually.

On the day that I was enjoying the art of Genoa, the non-commissioned officers were called together and addressed by the Headquarters Colonel concerning the reports reaching America. He deplored the scandal and when he finished the boys were thinking the same as he was. Unfortunately, upon completing his talk he left the room. It is too bad that he did not remain to hear the Regimental Colonel whose language would have edified him. When that officer finished, the boys were in a worse mood than when they entered.

Genoa was mild during March and ball games and boxing matches were in order Saturday afternoons at the Lido.

On the evening of the 2nd, our band and about three hundred men attended a celebration held at the Opera House for the purpose of welcoming home to Genoa several battalions of Genoese who had fought bravely in France.

A few days later several hundred American Military police came into Italy from France. Until this time we had had no M. P.'s other than our own and no one but a soldier can appreciate their absence. Their coming, however, relieved our men at Rome who joined us on the 6th.

Every American eye carefully scanned the harbor when daylight came each day for we knew our ship would one day steam into the harbor. One day, the "Guisseppe Verdi," entered port. In Treviso we had heard of this ship as being the one that would take us home. However, on the sixth of March, the Verdi steamed away and the boys settled back to their usual routine with heavy hearts.

On the seventh of March, after several weeks of negotiating, we were notified that fifty of the regiment could go to the Menton Leave Area for a week.

## CHAPTER XI

## Genoa—Reunited

AFTER A MOST ENJOYABLE WEEK at wonderful Monte Carlo and a safe return to Genoa, we were enthusiastically greeted at the "Miramare" with the news that we were leaving for home in three days on the steamer "Duca D'Aosta" which lay in the harbor. The Second Battalion had come in while we had been away, so that the regiment was again united. The Second was being "investigated" and we sincerely hoped that nothing would develop that would detain us. We welcomed the investigation but preferred it on the other side of the Atlantic.

However, our joy suddenly died for, on the 18th, we received a telegram from General Headquarters, France, that our departure was indefinitely postponed. All efforts to obtain a release were fruitless and on the morning of the 19th General McAndrews, Pershing's Chief of Staff and General O'Conner, Chief of Staff of the Service of Supplies, arrived. Their coming meant something serious, we were sure. Some felt that G. H. Q. regarded the 332nd as culprits and that we were to be sent to the Labor Battalions in France. Then, there was the ever present trouble in Fiume and neighboring territory and we feared that our regiment had been selected to return to that troubled land.

The suspense while terrible, was short, for at 2:30 P. M. all officers, commissioned and non-commissioned, were called out upon the hotel balcony. General McAndrews, I believe, complimented the "non-coms" on the appearance of our quarters and we began to breathe easier. Then he said that our scheduled sailing had been a mistake. Officers who had been sent to Italy to prepare the Regiment for its sailing thought the steamships in Genoa were for the 332nd regiment. Therefore, arrangements were made and everyone was preparing for the homeward voyage. He was sorry the mistake had been made but, we could not depart even on order from General Pershing, for our fate lay in the hands of the Supreme War Council. He said we would have to await our turn.

Settling down once more to an indefinite stay with the best frame of mind possible, the boys eagerly took advantage of the Company dances arranged by the American girls in Genoa. Some dances were held in the Ducal Palace, once the residence of the Doges of Genoa. The music was furnished by an excellent orchestra recruited from the band members.

Since our departure was thus indefinitely postponed, passes were issued to men of Italian birth, and to those of Greek birth permission was given to visit Greece. Negotiations were soon under way to send a party of fifty to Rome and the same number to Menton. On the 25th of March fifty men left for each place.

Suddenly, on March 26th, we received word that we were released and would sail on March 28th and 29th. The Second Battalion, "K" and "M" companies and detachments of the Medical, Supply and Machine Gun companies and Base Hospital 102 were to leave first on the "Canopic." Regimental Headquarters, the First Battalion, "I" Company, Field Hospital 331 and detachments of the Medical, Machine Gun and Supply Companies were to go on the "Duca D'Aosta," March 29th. "L" Company with detachments were to remain a few days to conclude all business and to pick up any men returning from leaves.

At this time we had men scattered all over Europe and telegrams were despatched to them. All except those who went to Greece succeeded in returning in time to go on one of the three ships.

The Canopic left Genoa on the 28th of March amid cheers, but the departure of the Duca was made the principal event because this ship was to carry the Colonel.

Those companies which were to go on the Duca D'Aosta marched through the gayly bedecked streets of Genoa amid great applause. Finally arriving at the crowded dock they filed aboard and, as each man walked up the gang-plank, his arms were filled with boxes containing cigarettes, candy and cookies given by the Red Cross, Y. M. C. A. and Knights of Columbus.

The docks were crowded with Genoese who, faithful to the end, had come to say goodbye to their American friends. As the ship began to move, all the whistles in the harbor shrieked, people waved their hands and kerchiefs and they called after the ship, their eyes dim with tears.

Genoa will always be remembered by the 332nd with love and admiration. The Genoese, more than any Italian people, strove to show their friendship. The Opera, the presentation of medals and flag and the general manner of treatment were all signs of an appreciative community.

## CHAPTER XII

## From Genoa to Ohio

THE JOURNEY FROM GENOA to Gibraltar consumed about forty hours, since we reached the "Rock" about 10:00 A. M. March 31st. A library aboard ship afforded the means of recreation to many while, to others, it proved interesting to watch the porpoises race and play at the prow of the ship as we sped through the water. Then, there were others who refused to be amused.

The ship's crew, evidently, had been spoiled by carrying American soldiers before, for various bribes were necessary before the proper amount of food could be obtained, in, at least, the second class dining room. With the exception of a few sick men, I never heard any of the third class passengers complaining of too much to eat or of too great a variety.

Arriving in the spacious harbor of Gibraltar, we did not dock but cast anchor until such time as the ship could be coaled. A few rods to our left was the famous Rock of Gibraltar.

There were at least a hundred other vessels at anchor in the splendid harbor. One of these was the Canopic which had left Genoa the day before us. She had stopped at Marseilles but had reached Gibraltar before us and, the next day, when we moved into the coal dock we found the Canopic alongside us.

On the morning of the 3rd, half of those aboard the two vessels were sent ashore to walk through Gibraltar. We were glad of a chance to get on land and glad of an opportunity to see the city, but we were compelled to remain in ranks every moment we were off the ship.

At any rate, we enjoyed the much needed exercise and also obtained a glimpse of the unique, cosmopolitan city of Gibraltar. It seemed, from the slight acquaintance, to be a very up-to-date city. All of the houses are built of stone and one obtains the impression of cleanliness. Our shore leave was limited to a walk through the main street and the return, when the other half of the men made the trip.

On the day that we were ashore the vessel was being coaled by hand.

On the morning of April 4th at 7:30 we moved out of the harbor. On our left we could see the rocky shores of Africa. Nothing could be distinguished except the mountains over which

hung a peculiarly dark, purple haze. On our right lay the green hills of Spain and the dark clouds cast a shadow over the hills, but where there was a break between two clouds, the sun shone through and the little white roofs of the stone houses sparkled as if a spotlight played upon them.

We soon passed the last point of land and were again upon the broad Atlantic. The consequent rocking of the ship, which we now saw was a very different boat from the stately Aquitania, disturbed the feelings of many. The weather also was colder than we had been experiencing.

On April 9th we encountered what we thought was quite a storm. The waves rushed over the deck rails and those adventurous spirits who loved to stand in the bow of the ship and allow the water to spray upon them, were ordered inside. The vessel rolled and pitched and standing in the bow of the boat and looking back, it was curious to watch the vessel twist about, almost like a stretched letter "S".

Since passing the Azores on the 7th, each morning the seemingly everlasting expanse of water met our eyes. We grew very tired of the voyage and heartily wished for land to appear. We seemed to be making little progress, our speed being about fifteen or sixteen miles an hour.

On the twelfth, the sea again became very rough and during the night a heavy fog descended upon us making necessary the weird cry of the fog horn. Upon awakening the next morning, we were relieved to see that the fog had lifted.

All this day we watched eagerly for land and, at last, at 4:45 P. M. the shore of Long Island was visible. As we drew nearer our destination we were in time to witness a sunset behind the Jersey hills, more beautiful, to us, than all of Italy's boasted sunsets. Later, as we passed up the lane marked by buoys, the lights of the Statue of Liberty lighted and a mighty cheer rose on the air.

We cast anchor inside the harbor and slept in the shadow of America once again. It was a most happy night.

In the morning, April 14th, 1919, the quarantine vessel visited us, found everything O. K., and in a few hours we were back at old Camp Merritt which we had left some ten months before.

Here we performed a disagreeable duty, namely, going through the delousing process. Upon entering the delousing building, we placed all of our clothes in wire baskets which were then collected and put into a machine. This steam and

heat producing machine was guaranteed to effectually put out of existence all cooties, etc., which had perchance survived the journey across the Atlantic.

While our clothes were thus being cleansed, we ourselves bathed, so that when we were finished with this bath, our clothes, dried and also hopelessly wrinkled, awaited us.

Being now clean and acceptable (?) we were permitted to move to a respectable section of the camp and proceed to the business of getting out of the army as rapidly as possible.

There were canteens, pack carriers, clothes, and so forth to be checked and turned in and work on these matters was started immediately. The rifles were to be kept for parades. The offices were like madhouses because of the hurry.

The "Canopic" arrived on the night of the 14th and the "Dante Alighieri" with the last of the regiment, came in on the 18th. On this last ship there were four young women from Fiume who had married Americans.

Passes were given freely and practically everyone in the regiment enjoyed a visit to New York City.

On the 21st, the 332nd Infantry formed at Washington Square, New York, and marched up Fifth Avenue passing thousands of cheering friends and admirers. At the head of the regiment, besides its Commanding Officer and his staff, rode General Guglielmotti, royal military attache to the Italian embassy at Washington, and his staff. Included in the parade were old Garibaldi veterans and representatives of New York's Italian societies.

Upon arriving at 102nd Street, the parade passed into Central Park where Mayor Hylan welcomed the men to New York and America. Following this the royal consul general of Italy in New York, Signor Tritoni, presented a gold medal to the regiment. General Guglielmotti then rehearsed the history of the deeds of the regiment in Italy and the regiment's Commanding Officer replied for the regiment. After these ceremonies, the regiment proceeded to the 69th regiment armory where refreshments were served.

A few days later, the news reached us at Camp that the Pennsylvania men in the regiment were to be sent to Camp Dix to receive their discharges there, so that on April 22nd, we bid farewell to approximately one hundred and fifty men from New Castle, Pa., most of whom had been in Headquarters Company.

Several officers and the regular army enlisted men parted with us here.

On the 24th, the regiment marched to Dumont, boarded the trains and was soon enroute to dear, old Ohio. However, instead of going direct to Camp Sherman, we stopped at Cleveland, for a parade.

The first section reached Cleveland in the morning of the 25th, followed by the other sections all of which arrived during the day.

Practically all of the nearby towns, such as Youngstown, Akron and Canton, had procured special trains for the relatives and friends of the regiment, so that during the day, those loved ones who had been separated for a year, met and embraced one another once more. It was a happy day for many.

On the 26th, the regiment paraded and again, as in New York, upheld its reputation as being one of the best marching organizations of the A. E. F. After the parade, the "Sons of Italy", once more endeavored to show their appreciation by presenting the regiment with a silver cup.

At Central Armory, the entire regiment was banqueted and the boys declared it was the most delicious meal they had since they left home.

During the remainder of the day, everyone was free to visit until about 7:00 P. M., when the first section moved out of Cleveland toward that haven, Camp Sherman, where the coveted "Honorable Discharge" was to be received.

April 27th at 4:00 A. M. was a cold and disagreeable day as we alighted from our tourist cars at the camp and were led to our last army home.

For several days, we were busy turning in equipment and preparing final records. At the termination of these various duties, the red discharge chevrons (the finest of them all, we thought) were distributed.

Beginning on May 2nd, the first companies of the regiment received their discharge papers. On the 3rd several more went through this process and by the evening of the 5th the entire regiment had been discharged, and its members had arrived at the enviable rank of "Mister."

No time was lost in boarding the special train for Columbus, home, loved ones and civilian life.

Today, a few months later, the old days and adventures seem like dreams and while few would care to go through the same hardships and experiences again, not one of the regiment, I dare say, regrets the days he wore the unconquerable khaki of Uncle Sam and the proud Lion of St. Mark.

*Finis.*

1194

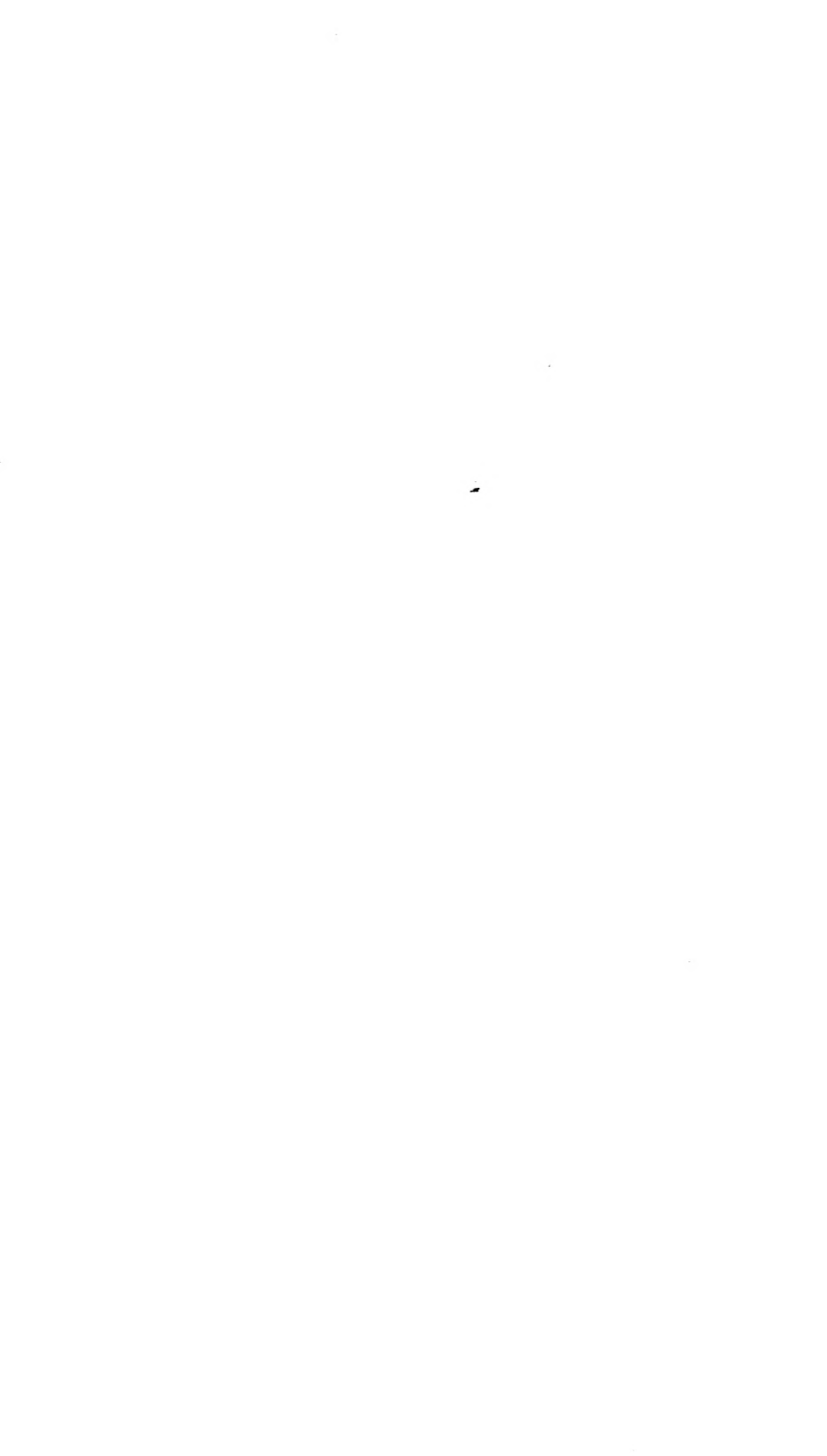
H

46-79









Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.  
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide  
Treatment Date: MAY 2001

**Preservation Technologies**  
A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION

111 Thomson Park Drive  
Cranberry Township, PA 16066  
(724) 779-2111



DEC 78



N. MANCHESTER,  
INDIANA 46962

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 007 692 115 5